

ADDIS ABABA

THE THIRD ALL-AFRICA
LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

1965



Father of all men, whose mercy is great toward all who stand in need, and whose Son is the redeemer of all who call upon him; we thank thee that thou hast called unto thyself a church to praise thy name and witness to thee on the vast continent of Africa.

We beseech thee for that church, and especially for all who are gathering at this time to consider the affairs of thy kingdom at the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Addis Ababa.

Let the light of thy sun shine, we pray thee, on the lands and peoples of Africa as they face the problems of today and their hopes for tomorrow. Put to flight the dark hosts of racial and national pride, of selfishness and intemperance, of ignorance and the worship of false gods. Dispel all fear and dismay, and bestow upon both pastors and people the illumination of thy word and the power of the Holy Spirit, that the possibilities for witness to thy Son and service in his name may be seen and grasped in a changing society.

Through the same, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord.

Amen

ADDIS ABABA

A RECORD OF THE THIRD ALL-AFRICA LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

October 12-21, 1965

The Conference was sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation,
Department of World Mission.

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THE DEPARTMENT OF WORLD MISSION
THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

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Preface

This book is a compilation of documents, plenary and section papers as well as study reports and resolutions of the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Addis Ababa, October 12—21, 1965. It has not been possible, however, to include the Bible studies in this volume nor could all addresses and reports be recorded. Some of the papers have also been slightly edited and shortened.

We hope that through the record of the conference as presented in this book the reader shall not only be able to share the issues and study-material of the Conference but also in the concern for the present and future life and task of the Lutheran churches in the constantly and rapidly changing continent of Africa.

Introduction

Addis Ababa, the beautiful capital of Ethiopia, has in the last decade become a frequent meeting place for conferences dealing with African and international affairs. Among them this last year were two remarkable *church* conferences. In January representatives for the Oriental Orthodox Churches had a 15-days meeting. It was the first time in several centuries that such a meeting was held. In October the Lutheran Churches had their *Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference* in this city. Both of these church conferences were held in the magnificent Africa Hall, which has been built to provide facilities for the free nations of Africa to meet and discuss their common problems and to serve as the headquarters for the Economic Commission for Africa.

It is interesting to note and may be also significant for the new situation that the invitation to hold the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Addis Ababa was extended not only by the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus but also officially by His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I. These invitations were received already in 1960 when the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference was assembled in Madagascar.

The fact that church conferences are recognized on state level indicates that the Christian church in Africa today not only is considered to represent vital African interests but also that it has got a recognized status and is expected to take its share of the responsibility for the future development on this continent. This was also clearly indicated in His Imperial Majesty's address to the conference in Addis Ababa when he said: "We do not believe that the religious and social problems that you, members of this conference, are going to discuss are less significant than the political and economic problems confronting the governments of Africa."*) It is important for the Church to realize this new situation and the challenges it implies.

But what is much more important than to be recognized is that the church itself recognizes its responsibilities in the new Africa. This was also one of the major concerns at this conference. The church has a responsibility in the particular situation in Africa at this particular time. This concern was already expressed in the conference theme "*A Living Church in a Changing Society*", but it became more than a theme, it was turned into questions which penetrated into the hearts of the participants through Bible studies, plenary

*) His Imperial Majesty's speech, see page 13.

papers, study sessions and discussions. At the opening session in the keynote address the speaker asked: "What is the Church expected — from God, from the world and from itself — to do at this time?" In other words: What is expected of us today and how shall we live up to the expectations? How shall we carry out our responsibilities and fulfil our commission today in this rapidly and constantly changing society? These were questions asked now and again throughout the conference. It is certainly correct to say that one of the most encouraging observations at the Addis Ababa Conference was the growing concern for the mission of the church.

The same basic questions were faced at the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference in Antsirabé 1960. In dealing with these issues the Antsirabé Conference felt that they were so essential and at the same time so complex that a more careful study than the limited time of that conference allowed was needed. Several of the main topics were, therefore, referred back to the churches for further study and re-submission at the next conference. The program of the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference became therefore closely related to the program of the Antsirabé Conference five years earlier.

To prepare the program in detail for the Addis Ababa Conference the Commission on World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation at its meeting in Stavanger, July 1963, established a Program Committee consisting of two members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanganyika and two members of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus. In addition one from each of the churches in Madagascar, South Africa and West Africa were appointed to serve as consultative members on the committee. At a meeting in June 1964 in Addis Ababa a tentative program outline was drawn up by the committee and this was further worked on and finally prepared by the LWF staff in Geneva. On the basis of the program introductory study material was then prepared by Geneva staff and sent to the churches five months prior to the conference. This was further followed up by regional pre-conference meetings in which the local churches were encouraged to participate as much as possible. The response from the churches at this point was extremely good and the pre-conference meetings were very well attended by church leaders, pastors, and missionaries. Through papers prepared by local church leaders on conference topics specifically relevant to their situation the study items of the conference became closely related to the local situation and much valuable material and information was made available. This was extremely helpful for the delegates as well as for the churches at large. We also believe that these meetings prepared the way for a more effective follow-up work of the conference.

On October 12 the conference was opened by the President of the LWF, Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz. 23 African Lutheran churches and the Lutheran Church of Jordan were represented by official delegates. Of them 86 were Africans and 18 non-Africans. In addition there were 68 observers representing mission boards, ecumenical organizations and non-Lutheran churches in Africa and other parts of the world. In addition there were also a number of invited guests and staff. The total of registered participants was 256.

The daily program opened with prayer and Bible studies. The topics for the Bible studies were worked out to coincide as much as possible with the

study program of the conference and at the same time be a study of the most important aspects of the living Church in this world. Six major plenary addresses were given, namely a key-note address, four study papers and a paper on the Continuation of the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences. Following presentation of each study paper special items related to the paper were assigned to the three permanent study sections which worked throughout the conference. As an introduction to each of these study items section papers were prepared and read in the study sections. Following that, each item was discussed for several hours. Reports and recommendations resulting from discussions in the study sections were presented at the end of the conference in plenary for final discussion and approval.

All the documents were available in the three official languages of the conference, namely: English, French, and Amharic, and normally distributed at the time they were presented. The language problem was easily solved in plenary sessions where the most modern equipment for simultaneous interpretation was available. The interpreters did an excellent job. In the study sections it was a little more difficult since no such equipment was available in the committee rooms and the more time-consuming consecutive translation had to be used.

The reports and resolutions from the study sections, which were reviewed, amended and adopted by the conference may contain statements that can be questioned both from the theological and practical point of view but two things have to be remembered: the pressure of time and the widely ranging study items. The program was definitely overloaded and there was not time enough to deal adequately with the many important questions. It is therefore hoped that the studies and discussions will continue on the local church level.

It should also be mentioned that as was the case with the previous two conferences, the Addis Ababa Assembly did not speak *for* the churches but rather *to* them and the statements and recommendations made are not in any way binding. It is up to the individual churches to make the best use of the results of the conference.

Among the special events during this conference several things have to be mentioned. His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I honored the conference first by a visit when he gave a thoughtful and encouraging address in which he expressed his appreciation of the missionary work done in Africa and of the Radio Voice of the Gospel. A few days later the participants were invited to a reception at the palace, which was also very much appreciated.

The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus arranged a splendid banquet for all participants and a number of invited guests one evening. Sight-seeing in Addis Ababa and a visit to the Radio Voice of the Gospel were also among the many enjoyable and appreciated events of this conference.

Nobody who participated will forget the solemn evening in the Mekane Yesus Church around the Lord's Table. Here we all felt that we belonged together and needed one another in carrying out the great commission given to us — to proclaim Christ in this world.

The extremely high quality of Bible studies, addresses and papers presen-

ted plus the excellent meeting facilities of Africa Hall and the perfect local arrangements made this conference an unforgettable experience for all who attended.

It is of course difficult to give an evaluation of the conference as to what actually was achieved, but it has no doubt meant a new inspiration and a new vision for those who attended. It has also raised issues which are of vital importance for the churches in Africa at this time, although further study of these issues is needed and it is hoped that this will be done on a local and regional level and that the initiative will be taken by the African churches themselves.

April 1966.

Manfred Lundgren

Department of World Mission
The Lutheran World Federation

Program

Theme: *A LIVING CHURCH IN A CHANGING SOCIETY*

BIBLE STUDIES

- Oct. 13 The Gathered Church — Prof. George W. Forell, USA
- 14 The Organized Church — Prof. George W. Forell, USA
- 15 The Proclaiming Church — Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, Switzerland
- 16 The Confessing Church — Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, Switzerland
- 18 The Serving Church — Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, Switzerland
- 19 The Worshipping Church — Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, Switzerland
- 20 The Suffering Church — Prof. George W. Forell, USA
- 21 The Hoping Church — Prof. George W. Forell, USA

PLENARY AND SECTION PAPERS

- Oct. 12 *KEY-NOTE ADDRESS*
Rt. Rev. Josiah Kibira, Tanzania
- Oct. 13 *INTER-LUTHERAN CHURCH ORGANIZATION*
Rev. Thomas Musa, Tanzania
- Oct. 12 *PLENARY PAPER I: The Church in Africa and the African Churches*
Dr. Martin Kretzmann, USA

Sections:

Item 1: Independence and Partnership
Dean Kilbon Msomi, South Africa

Item 2: Institutionalism and the Preaching of the Gospel
Rev. James Dretke, Ghana

Item 3: Lutherans, Other Churches and the "Christian Church"
Rev. Rakoto Andrianarijaona, Madagascar

- Oct. 14 *PLENARY PAPER II: The Nurture of the People of God*
Rev. Ezra Gebremedhin, Ethiopia

Sections:

Item 1: The Ministry of Word and Sacrament

Rev. Vernon Toso, Madagascar

Item 2: Education for Christian Living and Stewardship

Rev. Zephaniah Gunda, Tanzania

Item 3: The Congregation and Family Life

Rev. Judah Kiwovele, Tanzania

- Oct. 16 *PLENARY PAPER III: Congregational Responsibility for the Christian Individual*

Rev. Walter Trobisch, Germany

Sections:

Item 1: Word and Sacrament in Church Discipline

Dean Paulus Mhlungu, South Africa

Item 2: Sexual Ethics, Marriage, Divorce and Polygamy

Sister Priscilla Mdiniso, South Africa

Item 3: Personal Freedom and the Christian Obligation

Prof. Andriamanantenasa, Madagascar

- Oct. 18 *PLENARY PAPER IV: The Function of the Church in Society and State*

Mr. Louis Rameliarison, Madagascar

Sections:

Item 1: The Church in Village and City

Rev. Roland Payne, Liberia

Item 2: The Conflict of Generations

Dr. Solomon Inquai, Ethiopia

Item 3: The Nation, Politics and the Church

Prof. Sven Rubensson, Ethiopia

SCHEDULE

Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference, Addis Ababa, October 12—21, 1965

	Tuesday Oct. 12	Wednesday Oct. 13	Thursday Oct. 14	Friday Oct. 15	Saturday Oct. 16	Sunday Oct. 17	Monday Oct. 18	Tuesday Oct. 19	Wednesday Oct. 20	Thursday Oct. 21
9:00 10:00	Opening 10:30 Key-note Address Plenary	MORNING PRAYER BIBLE STUDIES				10:00 Church Services	MORNING PRAYER BIBLE STUDIES			
10:00 10:30		His Imperial Majesty's Address 10:00 Plenary	C O F F E E				C O F F E E			
10:30 12:15			Study Session	Study Session	Third Paper		Study Session	Study Session	Plenary	Plenary
12:20 12:30	ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS					15:30 — 17:00 Rally	ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEWS			
12:30 15:00	L U N C H						L U N C H			
15:00 16:00	First Paper	Paper on AALC Contin.	Second Paper	Excursion and/or Shopping	Study Session		Fourth Paper	Study Session	Plenary	Plenary
16:00 16:20	C O F F E E					19:30 Church Banquet	C O F F E E			
16:20 18:00	Study Session	Study Session	Study Session		Study Session		Ecum. Reports	Palace Reception	Plenary	Closing Session
18:00 20:00	S U P P E R						S U P P E R			
20:00 21:30	Country Reports	RVOG Ecum. Reports	Country Reports	Study Session	20:30 Communion Service		Study Session	Plenary	Country Reports	

Welcome Address

Dr. Schiotz, Fellow Delegates, Observers and Visitors to the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with a deep sense of joy and thankfulness that I welcome you to Addis Ababa in the name of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church — Mekane Yesus on the occasion of this important conference in the life of the young Lutheran Churches in Africa; joy because it is just five years since we met in conference in Antsirabé, and it gives one real joy when brothers and sisters meet after a considerable lapse of time; and thankfulness because we in Ethiopia and, no doubt, all of you have been thinking, praying and working towards the realisation of this conference.

We are therefore deeply thankful that it has pleased our God and Saviour to enable us to meet here today to consider together things that concern His Kingdom and the Salvation of our fellow men.

Events have succeeded one another in Africa with astonishing speed since the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference took place in Marangu, Tanganyika, ten years ago. In the political sphere there were only four independent states in Africa in 1956; in this year of grace 1965, there are 36 independent African States! Similarly, profound changes have taken place in our continent in other spheres of human life and activity, not least in the spiritual life of African peoples. The young churches have developed and are developing rapidly in the healthy atmosphere of African freedom but, inevitably, this has also brought problems, in some cases acute problems, in its wake; and it is such problems that, we have come to consider together at this conference.

The problems that we shall try to tackle together here are not easy but if we approach them with a sense of humility and dependence upon the Lord of the church, I have no doubt that we shall be given the wisdom to find solutions for them.

With these few words I commend our labours here to the Lord and call upon Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, President of the Lutheran World Federation, officially to open the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference.

Emmanuel G. Sillassie

President of the Addis Ababa congregation
Evangelical Lutheran Church Mekane Yesus

His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I

Emperor of Ethiopia

gave the following address at the conference on October 13, 1965*)

We welcome to Our Capital the delegates of the All-African Lutheran Churches and also those members of the same Church who have come from the United States of America, Europe and Asia. It is Our duty to be among you at this moment and to open your Conference.

It is gratifying to recall that after nearly 1500 years of division in the Christian Church, venerable Heads of the Oriental Orthodox Churches assembled together in this very Hall in January of last year for deliberations on Christian Unity, the Spread of the Teachings of the Gospel, and World Peace. World Church leaders have also been frequently assembling in other Countries to discuss the responsibilities of the Church of Christ and how to execute them efficiently in order to promote closer relations and cooperation among themselves. It has given a sense of satisfaction to see that Christians and their leaders, realizing the need for closer relations and aware of their great spiritual responsibilities, have in our time come closer in the promotion of their noble cause.

Peace, universally heralded by the Angels at the Birth of Our Savior, has become even more necessary to mankind than ever before. The alternatives confronting the governments of today are no longer peace or war, but peace or the annihilation and complete doom of mankind. Therefore, it has now become the noble responsibility of Christians and peoples of other faiths and their Leaders throughout the world to pray and to work hard for the preservation of world peace.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the spread of the teachings of the Gospel in Africa and Asia by various Christian missionaries in the past centuries has served as a guiding factor and instrument for the freedom and independence now enjoyed by many Africans and Asians today. As St. Paul said, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty". Many of the present day distinguished leaders of the newly independent African States are men who received their education in church schools and who, inspired by the

*) Translation from Amharic.

teachings of the Gospel on human freedom, succeeded in liberating their people after a patient and great struggle. When we look back at this unchallengeable fact, we can clearly see that all their tireless efforts and sacrifices in this glorious struggle were not in vain.

Although the Ethiopian people were among the first to receive Christianity and have, with great sacrifices, protected and sustained their faith and human rights, including their independence, up to the present day, in is an established fact that in the past hundred years foreign evangelist missionaries have greatly assisted many thousands of Ethiopians. Moreover, it is also a fact that they have brought up and educated many Ethiopians among whom, we are happy to see, many are placed in responsible posts and are serving their country with diligence and devotion. Along with the missionaries' assistance towards the spread of modern education and the betterment of the health of the people, their contributions towards the building of hospitals and the running of clinics is not a matter to be overlooked. Besides teaching the Gospel, they have also given all types of disinterested aid throughout the world. In the social field, in morality, education, food and clothing, these missionaries have stretched their helping hand to Africans, Asians and to other peoples of the world.

Motivated by the teachings of Christ and by the words of St. Mark, "Go ye into all the World and preach the Gospel to every creature", We are happy to see that the Lutheran World Federation has succeeded in building and establishing a radio station in the capital of Ethiopia — the ancient island of Christianity — to spread the teachings of the Gospel to the peoples of Africa and to those of other countries.

We thank the Almighty for the great services that the station has been rendering to Ethiopians and other Africans in particular. Our own missionaries spread out within our country are making use of this medium to preach the Gospel, which has been the tradition in the past. It is Our hope and wish that it will continue to be the light of the Gospel to many people for many years to come. In its great task, Our support and that of Our government has never been and will never be withheld.

We do not believe that the religious and social problems that you members of this conference are going to discuss are less significant than the political and economic problems confronting the governments of Africa. However, since the Holy Scriptures have taught us that everything can be accomplished by those have faith, We hope that your few days of deliberations here in Addis Ababa on matters of spiritual and social problems will be successful through the guidance and the power of Our Saviour. We wish you a pleasant time with your Ethiopian brothers and sisters during your stay among them.

May God Almighty bless your deliberations.

Delegates arrive at Addis Ababa Airport



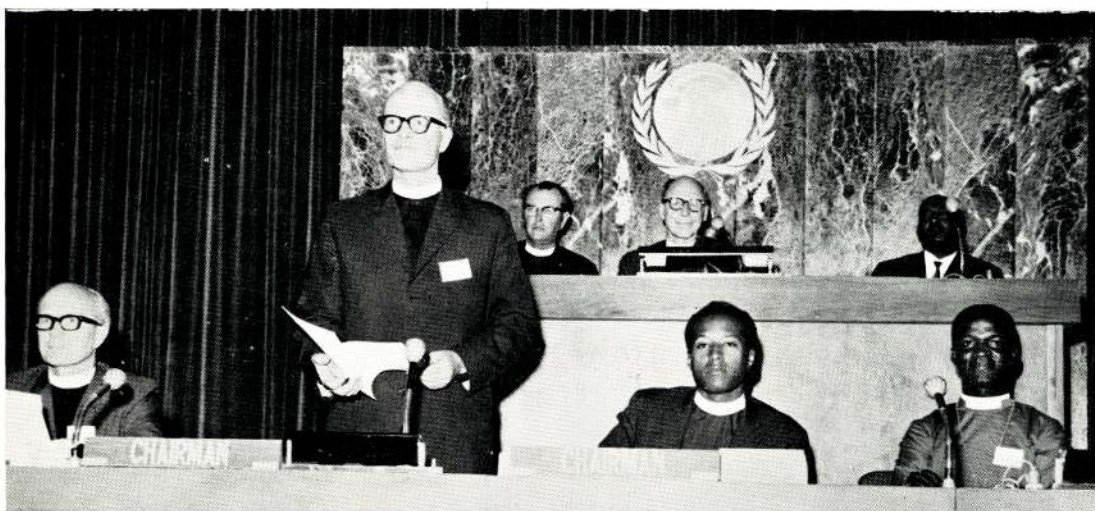
Mr. Emmanuel Gebre Sillassie arranging formalities at the airport.

On the way to the palace. Afrika Hall in the background.





Conference Participants outside Africa Hall.



The Conference Hall, where plenary sessions were held.

The Rostrum — Africa Hall from left, back row: Bishop H. Fosseus, Dr. F. Schiotz; Mr. Emmanuel Gebre Sillassie; front row: Rev. M. Lundgren; Dr A. Sovik, Rev. Ezra Gebremedhin; Bishop J. Kibira.

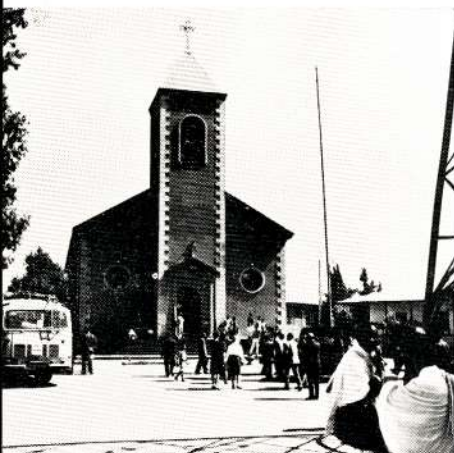




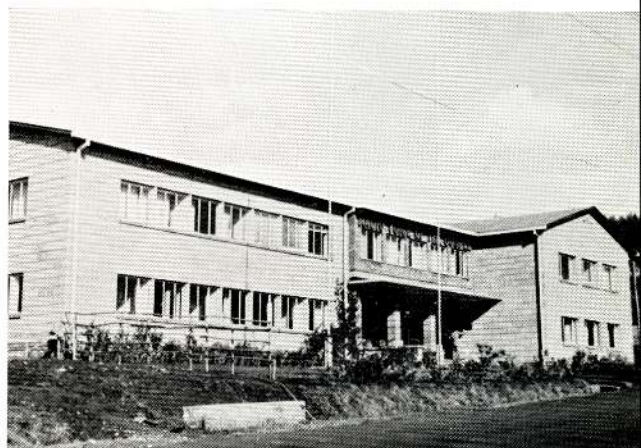
*His Imperial Majesty, the
Emperor of Ethiopia visits
the Conference.*



*Dr. S. Aske and the Rev.
C. Mau.*



The Mekane Yesus Church.



Radio Voice of the Gospel



Bishop S. Moshi.



Delegates in Session.



Ethiopian Interpreters.



Ethiopian girl at the control board.

Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz

President of the Lutheran World Federation, responded:

Your Imperial Majesty,

It is my privilege and great pleasure to express the gratitude of the assembly for your warm welcome and for the words of great encouragement that you have spoken. The cheerful spirit in which your people are responding to our needs at this conference heavily underscores your cordial welcome.

Your Imperial Majesty, the address to which we have just listened reveals your intimate acquaintance with the work of the Church. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that throughout your reign you have encouraged the work of all Churches. Without this support and encouragement the Radio Voice of the Gospel would not have been the reality it is today. In fact since this is the first time that the All-Africa Lutheran Conference has had an opportunity to assemble since the Radio Voice of the Gospel began functioning, it is my privilege on behalf of this Assembly to express our heartfelt appreciation for the great encouragement which you have given this project. Your Imperial Majesty, there is a strong spot of respect and affection in the hearts of the Conference delegates for your person. In a real sense it may be said that you have been a benefactor of the All-Africa Lutheran Conference. You are the only Government Head that sent greetings and words of encouragement to the Marangu Conference in 1955, to the Antsirabé Assembly in Madagascar in 1960, and today you have honored us by your presence.

Your Imperial Majesty, as you have invoked God's blessing on our deliberations, so we pray that God may keep you in good health and give you strength to continue the great progressive program that you have fostered for your people — yes, for all of Africa. Thank you!

Key-note address

A LIVING CHURCH IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

Josiah Kibira*

Marangu, 1955; Antsirabé, 1960 — and now Addis Ababa, in the year of the Lord, 1965.

The first All-Africa Lutheran Conference was held at Marangu, as we all know. Marangu, situated on the slopes of the fantastic Mount Kilimanjaro and dominating the whole of the African continent, had an interesting and special meaning to that which was to follow after 1955. Only some years after the Lutherans had gathered there, Kilimanjaro was to be recognized as the right place by Mwalimu Julius Nyerere — the president of Tanzania — to put the torch of freedom. This torch would decidedly symbolize the *Uhuru* which has almost spread throughout the whole continent since 1961. Despite the objections from remaining colonialists and other opposers, this *Uhuru* was and is meant to be our own.

We notice that the Lutherans met six years before the *Uhuru* of Tanzania and of many other states. To be sure: "Quo Vadis Africa?" was the relevant question of the time. Colonialism was doomed. Yet one question remained: would the era of missions end together with the era of colonialists? Thus Lutherans can claim the credit of a prophetic vision when they gathered on the highest point of Africa, and as it were, predicted — as they looked down in all directions — the "Freedom" and "Unity" for Africa. This freedom and unity — be it political, religious, or of another kind — was since the Marangu meeting, to be *the* song, dominating the living Church in a changing society. It is my privilege to suggest that all that has occurred since Marangu, revealed in the Antsirabé report, up to this very day (i.e. the present situation in Africa with all its developing trends: political, cultural, social and religious); all this can be summed up clearly and precisely by these two words: *freedom and unity*. One must read the key-note address given at Antsirabé to understand how I have reached this conclusion.

May I briefly mention that Lutherans met at Madagascar to meditate, as if they were on their own "Patmos". At that meeting, with new vision and power, the delegates worked together to face the problems for the next five

*) The Rt. Rev. Josiah Kibira is Bishop of the North-Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanganyika.

years. Addis Ababa calls us together for the traditional All-Africa Lutheran Conference. Yet at this very place, within this very hall, the key-note words "freedom and unity" have been especially studied and understood during the last years.

We are back on the continent, we recognize, with much interest, our tradition, a tradition proudly symbolized by the mount — the island — and now by a country that comparatively speaking has almost always been free. We, from the rest of Africa, must greatly honor the Emperor for his example, his bravery, and his undenied leadership. Therefore, in this key-note address, I greet and pay tribute to His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor Haile Selassie I.

Now, my brethren of the African Lutheran world, if our key words are really "freedom and unity", and if we agree that we are on soil of the land of freedom and traditional Christianity, I then ask you, what hinders us from freely and independently analyzing, pondering and evaluating the role of the Church in this situation? We could ask ourselves questions like the following: What is the Church expected — from God, from the world, and from itself — to do at this time? Is it prepared for its task? And, would it not be best for our non-African Lutheran brethren, here and abroad, like Phillip of old, to help and encourage this freedom of mind to interpret the African situation?

Specifically speaking, both ecclesiological and theological freedom are lacking in the African churches. There is need to change the Church's ecclesiological foreign image and make it more indigenous. This change must affect church buildings, liturgy, forms of worship and symbolism. The church image is still foreign and I think we must analyze this image and then act. Then we can gradually discover some points of departure. We will then realize how our African art and culture can be given Christian meaning. When this happens, then the African art and culture can enrich the Church in Africa.

Theologically, there is a lack of freedom of mind. With the exception of a few cases, we can hardly think independently. We depend mostly on advisors from Europe and America. Our theological boards are very inadequate as long as they reflect American, Swedish or German Lutheran theologies rather than African theologies. It is even more unfortunate that we rely upon these churches whose own backgrounds lead to interpretations of faith, dogmatics and ministries differing from each other. And yet we must stress the universality of Christ's Church. We must guard ourselves against an African Church and against what we mean by a *confessio Africana*. Yet the question is this: how long must we depend on the European churches to do our thinking in the very things we wish to do?

Research into African religious beliefs has revealed that nearly all of the Africans had believed in God. Some tribes possessed an elaborate religious system including superstition, magic and ancestral worship, taboos and reverence to the sacred and the aged. If this is true, then some theologians are needed today to find out what all these African beliefs have in common. These theologians must also discover the similarities between the African beliefs and the beliefs of other cultures throughout the world. All this must then be evaluated in the light of the Christian message. If

certain common principles are discovered, they may promote a mutual religious research on the part of the Western and African Christians. The African theologians should not depend upon Western advisors. Both of them would work together as partners. In this way, the African theses would be original.

The question regarding this lack of freedom of mind would then be: Who stops Africans from using their minds? Let me emphasize here that as long as the African Church is dependent upon Western churches, it cannot attain real freedom of mind. Are we allowed to criticize and think independently without the threat (and consequent fear) of losing our traditional and universal connection, our financial aid, and in some cases, our theological dialogue with other churches; especially those from which we have emerged? It would be relevant here to quote a missionary superintendent of an African church. He placed little value on clerical garments. At one time he threatened to withdraw the financial support of the mission if the African church leaders decided to introduce such robes into their church.

We can refer to the question of episcopacy in an African, united, Lutheran church whose supporting missions have different backgrounds. There the question concerning the joining of ministries cannot be discussed and answered by the Africans themselves. Our theological thinking is "linked up" with our financial needs; and we are thus bound and cannot form our own opinions. Any well-informed African Lutheran will have noticed that articles evaluating such theologically important questions (for example, in the *Lutheran World* are written by western people. Is it not really time for Africans to think and choose the type of ministry which they want for their own churches? Is it not time that *they*, for example say why a Christian Lutheran head priest should wear a robe and mitre; why he should have a special seat in the church? Our African church leadership should be based on *our own* religious and political systems. These resources — robe, mitre, and the special seat — should be based on the ideas behind the type of garments the old, traditional African religious priests used to wear. Yet, these resources could only be valuable, if they are "demythologized", and if they do not conceal the "evangelicalness" of the Lutheran Church. One could ask another question: could we not be so free in Christ, for example, that African churches could invite "eastern" Christian co-workers and missionaries and pay them with "western" money?

A. FREEDOM AND UNITY

There are many factors which make our task difficult as we attempt to evaluate the situation in Africa today. Yet we have chosen these two key words to sum up all that has taken place and is responsible for the present situation. The third All-Africa Lutheran Conference differs from the previous conferences in one striking way: now, unlike the time of Marangu and Antsirabé, freedom is a reality in most parts of the continent.

For most of Africa — although to be sure *not* all of Africa, it is true to say that we have freedom. We in the Church, like the political heroes which

led Africa to liberation, must also speak of unity and make it a reality. There are certain typical dangers in our Church in Africa. For example, the Church tends to withdraw into the stronghold of faith, pretending to be unaware of the world outside.

The point at this juncture is a very delicate one. After colonialism the situation may seem unclear, especially for outsiders. There appears to be no real freedom within free Africa. However, the main emphasis here is that Christians in Africa should be so free that they can choose the time to speak on political issues. Moreover, the criticism of Christian leaders not speaking out as much as they should, depends on the circumstances within countries where freedom of speech is lacking. Yet, if our cowardice continues, these factors may isolate the Christian Church from the African people.

On the one hand we may feel we are too small to do anything. On the other, our pietism may make us feel indifferent. We have a complex citizenship. As Christians we belong to both this and the other world. Yet these reactions simply cannot justify the Church's isolation. We shall have to return to this double citizenship and the obligation of the church somewhat later.

Spiritual freedom is another field which needs our consideration and decision. Not all which the political freedom brings is of spiritual value. It is true that we have freedom to choose the way in which we want to live. But the important thing is whether or not the life we choose is one that will help our spiritual development as Christians. It all depends on who gives the spiritual freedom of choice and what this choice will be. Here the youth in particular need our guidance as church leaders. We need to interpret the Gospel in a language which they will understand and which will guide them to choose the Christian ethics to which they will adhere. If this guidance is not available (and this can only be found through individual personal encounter with the Lord Christ Himself) we will have to face a spiritual bankruptcy and a spiritual emptiness in a free Africa. Our obligation here is to stress in our preaching the importance of a personal encounter with God through Christ. This must also be emphasized to the youth preparing for confirmation. Christ should be the real foundation of our moral and ethical teaching.

Freedom is ours, but in reality freedom is never ours — it is a gift from the God of history. We never really have it: we must always be alive to its values and therefore strive for it and receive it anew out of God's hand. And when that happens, we have to receive this freedom, like all other spiritual gifts, with new hands.

Now, whatever kind of freedom we speak about here — be it political or spiritual — it is an achievement that brings with it responsibility. Our fight against the three enemies of Africa, i.e. poverty, ignorance and disease, will eventually liberate us more and more from economic dependence. We finally shall discover that in the last resort, freedom is an individual's response to the call of God.

But freedom and unity are not just a combination, nor are they just complementary. They are secretly in tension with one another. There have been contributions to church union in Africa, such as the contributions of

Nigeria and South Africa. Yet, let us look at another African Lutheran area. It is true that we Lutherans in Tanzania are free as a country and as a church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (E.L.C.T.) is a fact and a great achievement. And yet we need to fit the E.L.C.T. into the framework of the whole Christian Church. Yes (and thank God) we are Lutherans. Yet, between now and the year 2000 A.D., stronger unity and oneness for the whole of the African continent, even for the United States of Africa, will be an issue of greatest concern. However, as I am speaking, there is no one in this hall who does not know (to his sorrow) that there are small-scale tribal frictions which act against the unity for which we seek. What will be the great ideological themes in uniting this continent? For one thing, we cannot take for granted that these themes will be nice and Christian and comfortable. Therefore our responsibility for the future of the continent is greater. In this matter, we are not limited to a restricted sphere, but rather we are placed in Africa by God, at this particular time. We share the responsibility for wider, fateful trends and developments of our great continent. If this is true, then the Church has a prophetic task. It must obediently speak the prophetic word when God summons it.

But will that be enough? And we ask, "What does God require?" Well, such questions are open to us all. It is true there can be a wrong kind of Christian unity; especially when this unity is superficial, sentimental, narrow and prematurely framed. We should not be satisfied with such short cuts.

Yet it is right at this point, we must see the challenge to the Lutheran Church. We should not withdraw into a corner — as we have recently decided to do in Tanzania regarding negotiations for wider unity. We are Lutherans, we know "in whom" and "what" we believe. We have particular emphasis in our doctrine; especially in this precious one — "justification by faith alone" — and in many others. But this, our very heritage, is our challenge. We see that we must share it with others; and we do this when we work for wider unity, not when we withdraw or escape. It was once said that when we are free to face God, then we are free to face one another. If we have something fundamental to give, our freedom must not hinder us from being free to give what we have to others.

B. TRADITION AND TRADITIONS

There is a unity which we have expressed in the word *Obuntu* (sign of humanity). This precious word can hardly be translated into western languages. There is the Tradition (i.e. with a capital "T", including the Gospels and the Epistles in the New Testament; the Apostles' interpretation of the Gospel, and then all that followed in the church history). The unity we have in Tradition is also an already "given" unity. But there are also traditions (with a small "t", including the African personality and his traditions). We cannot neglect Tradition and traditions when considering our freedom and our unity. In short, we must admit that because of Tradition and traditions, there is already some kind of a given unity of mankind. That is why African Lutheranism has to keep in mind the universality of the Christian Church when considering its own existence and development. We all belong to the same Lord.

Here the question of "indigenization" of Christianity must be taken up in short. There are many good traditions in the African culture which have made an impact on groups of people. These traditions convey certain unique values. We must be careful before we abandon them as Christianity is introduced. If they are indigenous, then we need to give them Christian meaning and root the Gospel into the African soil. At this point it has to be mentioned that the real "indigenizer" is the African himself.

There are also traditions that may have originated from other countries which were introduced into Africa when Christianity came. These include hymns, modes of worship, etc., which have a certain impact upon the people. The African Christians, in their rebellion against colonialism, should not necessarily throw away some of these precious traditions simply because Christianity and colonialism have been connected. At the same time, the missionaries made mistakes by abandoning African traditions and by branding them as paganism. These mistakes cannot be neglected by any sound modern African religious scientist. In short, there are some traditions which are now part of our Lutheran heritage wherever we may be and such belong to us all. This is something in which we should rejoice.

We have already emphasized the important ground on which we now stand, namely this country with the great Tradition stretching from Isaiah to the Acts of the Apostles to the great missionaries Eudsius and Frumentius (350 A.D.), up to now. There is that noble chain of Tradition. But there is another truth: chains can bind, become rigid and sterile. We are all aware that the Eastern Orthodox Churches are participating more and more in the ecumenical movement, if not now leading. But here again, we Lutherans must face another challenge. We rejoice because we have a relatively clear understanding of our confession. (And I must tell you I often wonder why all people are not Lutherans, even though I do not have sufficient words to explain that which makes me so sure of our faith and confession.) Yet, at the same time, we would be wrong if we would bluntly say: "We have the whole truth." Such a generalization would be "killing faith". Concerning the church structure, the African Lutheran Church must not be ashamed to learn from the Tradition of the Church, which to be sure, may stand in tension with our traditions. Let us Lutherans humbly admit at this point that we too see "in part". We must always try to understand the whole truth.

As I speak about Tradition and its importance for the Lutheran Church, we must rejoice for and recognize the living forces of renewal, mediated through the revival movement. We see it here in Ethiopia (read the missionary pioneer Wachsmann's book on the subject), in Madagascar and in East Africa. Thus Tradition and renewal need each other so that renewal does not find new ways of expression, contrary to the Gospel. Such new ways of renewal could become a judgment upon the Church.

C. RENEWAL AND OUTREACH OF THE CHURCH

We face an even greater challenge in the "Living Church in a Changing Society". The free and united Africa — as already indicated both at Marangu and Antsirabé — will be more and more an urbanized Africa. The rapid growth and progress in Africa cities is really breathtaking. Dar-es-Salaam

has grown from 67,227 in 1948 to 128,742 in 1962; Nairobi has grown from 118,976 in 1948 to 266,794 in 1962. The population of Lagos, Nigeria, has almost doubled between the years 1950 and 1963, growing from 230,000 to 410,000. Tananarive has jumped from 189,924 in 1955 to 254,271 in 1962. The population of Accra has more than doubled between 1948 and 1960. Its population rose from 135,926 to 337,828.¹⁾

In addition we must remember the migration that is going on in some parts, for example in the Liberian mining areas. Or take Port Harcourt in Nigeria, which, as I have heard, has had an increase of population from 60,000 to 300,000 in only ten years.²⁾ Has the church given due attention to the question of women and family problems in such areas of growing and even overpopulation?

In all cities Islam is a growing and a competent religion of the first degree. Should not the Christian Church take this religion as a missionary object rather than as a competition to the Church? A very useful study has been done on "The Church and the Problems of the Town", Dar-es-Salaam, the 14th to the 21st of May, 1964. I recommend that you study their suggestionstowards the development of a new pattern of urban congregations as missionary communities, p. 81—98.

This growth and progress and the problems pertaining to it, as experienced by the West, will soon be experienced by all of Africa. The challenge is: how prepared are we, as a renewed traditional Church, to meet these changes? Is the Church present in these parts of Africa? Has it withdrawn? Is the pastor afraid to go into "corrupted" areas because his own piety might be defiled? Or is he, because of his comparatively poor status, afraid to confront his better situated fellow Christians?

"The population of Africa has grown from 216,000,000 in 1955 to 263,000,000 in 1965. In the age-bracket 5—19 years, there were in 1955 75 million and in 1965 92 million, which gives us an idea of the growing number of this age group. As regards secondary education, figures available for 29 countries (in Tropical Africa) show that some 59,000 African girls were enrolled representing about one-fifth of the total enrollment of African students at this level."³⁾

Because of these figures, we must take the educational problems of this continent seriously. There is the great percentage of illiterates on the one hand, and the efforts that are being made today in education on the other.

Then we are faced with questions like the following:

1. What can the church do to help in this "heroic campaign"?
2. What shall the growing literates and educated young people read?
3. What are we doing to take care of the young generation which is increasingly growing in number?

Despite progress, there are parts of Africa which have traditionally resisted change. These parts need the Church's particular attention. One

¹⁾ These figures are quoted from the United Nations Demographic Yearbooks for 1952 and 1963.

²⁾ This fact was provided by Rev. Lundgren of the Lutheran World Federation.

³⁾ Unesco Report 1961 — World Survey of Education.

quotation from an article written by R. H. Edwin Espy entitled "Personal Impressions of Contemporary Africa" explains what I mean here: "Yet is Africa truly changing? Deep down, is the Africa of the past disappearing? I certainly cannot answer this question. Nor can anyone diagnose definitively such a complex agglomeration of historic forces. But along with the winds of change, there are mighty tides of continuity, some good, some bad: the tides of tribal loyalty and hostility — which clearly threaten the much-proclaimed Pan Africanism; the continuing confusion of tongues and lingering linguistic attachments — walls of separation; the tenacious grip of superstition, even among many Christians; the practice of polygamy, which certainly will break with social change but which is still a powerful force; the prevalent paternalism of family, village, economic, social and political institutions; the lack of natural resources in many areas, together with the continued exploitation and exportation by non-African companies of much of the mineral and agricultural wealth that exists in other areas; the great distances and natural land-barriers, impeding communication and transportation; the continuing high incidence of illness and mortality; the drain on human energy and initiative that is endemic in a tropical climate."

Africa is still a battle ground of the world; once colonial, then economic, and now economic, military, ideological, and religious. What is God's purpose for this people, this African continent, this vortex of human antitheses and paradoxes? What does He expect of His Church.

Thus, the Church must be dynamic, i.e. not the "pastor's Church", but the Church consisting of "the whole people of God — the *laity*". The church leaders must give meaningful and decisive responsibility to the laymen. This belongs to the dynamic and missionary nature of a living church. The whole people of God must dedicate themselves to Him in *praise*, in *service*, and in *unity*.

In our Diocese, the active layman is becoming more and more a reality: the typist in the office is leader of the revival fellowship meetings; the teacher's wife as leader of the women of the "Bethania" group; the politician taking full part in the Church and in the Synodal Council; the prison's commander as the church warden. These people are building the Body of Christ in this continent.

The living Church shall follow the footsteps of the Master, who was a servant. The Church must take a dialectical attitude toward the political unity of the whole continent. The Church must show solidarity, it must set forth genuine aspirations, and it must express its wishes to *serve* Africa. The world must not expect the Church only to withdraw. The Church is in the world, although not of the world. It is to serve as salt, and as salt (and not as sugar) it must mix in the world, for the preservation of the world. Since the Church wishes to serve, there are things to which it will have to say no.

To this realm of "service" belongs many things the Church is called to provide; for example, diaconia. Our freedom will move us towards God and man through the Holy Spirit, since no one can love God and hate his brother. Mind you — we do not have to choose our neighbor; he is placed in our

way by the greatest deacon himself, Jesus Christ, who says: "Take care of him for me." Many times the Lutheran bishops, priests and presidents have simply and coldly "passed by". Here I remember those prostitutes, juvenile delinquents, unemployed youth, illegitimate children, unsaved, mentally disturbed, epileptic and handicapped in whom all (except Jesus) have lost hope. How long, brethren, are we going to go on unsympathetically laughing and carelessly passing these "poor ones"? Yet, since the Gospel has this social character, they, in fact, have the Gospel on their side. Why not ask ourselves, "Cannot He who saved me save this other one too? Shall we go on merely preaching the Gospel to these hungry souls, when what they may really need is food, clothing, medical aid, or just a place to sleep? Thank God, and thank the Lutheran world that so far much has been done. Yet this is not sufficient, especially as far as it is not being done by the African Christians themselves. The interpretation of the Gospel will remain one-sided if we do not note that He who commands "repent your sins", is the same one who says "take care of him (this alcoholic) for me". For those who do this, even if their credit shall not be given to them on earth, or if it is given to others instead, their reward shall be increased a hundred times in heaven.

The question of church discipline is still an issue for the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference. There is still too much "legalism" fighting against the Gospel. In our Diocese we have just reduced the number of restrictions which would suspend a Christian from Holy Communion to only two: any type of superstition or breaking marriage; and that is all.

It is true the Church must support monogamy as the ideal relationship between the sexes, but the issue is not easy. Polygamy is very deeply rooted in the culture of some parts of Africa. Thus the Church is faced with an unanswered question: what shall we do to "save" a polygamist, not what shall we do to banish a polygamist from the Church. All pastors have an obligation to fast and pray for the fallen brethren. Meanwhile, in tenderness and kindness they should visit, counsel and plead with them to the love of God. The question of polygamy needs to be discussed and argued in special meetings, lectures, councils and newspapers. It involves our most intellectual Christians. In God's own way and time it can be solved. So, in my opinion, the question whether a man can be a Christian and remain a polygamist, has a "yes" and a "no" answer. It is a "yes" for one who before he believed was already polygamous. Maybe he should be helped to keep his faith as he is.

Nevertheless, it is a "no" because the Church does not tolerate polygamy. For a Christian to take a second wife is to break his vows to the Church and live constantly in resistance against God (Matthew 19: 4 ff.).

In conclusion, we must give special attention to the role of theological education if the Church is to succeed with its present task. The right people must be recruited for the ministry. There must be perpetual revision of the teaching methods in the theological schools. Such revisions will keep the methods relevant to the present day needs. This is most important as we prepare people for the tasks of prophecy and priesthood for both rural and urban situations. We will then have people who will know the social pro-

blems, and will deal with them with the right understanding of Law and Gospel.

Marangu — Antsirabé — Addis Ababa. Hitherto, dear brethren, the Lord has guided us along His path in Africa. The Church in Africa has been moving like Abraham of old — into an unknown country — in *faith*, looking to the star and counting the stars into the future. Thus we are here to face all these challenging opportunities. Here we are; but soon we must go back and work. The conference must discuss all that calls for self-examination, it must seek new ways to discover how orientation in the rapidly developing and changing continent can be found. We ask for guidance from God and His Holy Spirit in all vital questions. We must prepare to make adjustments to these new situations. Perhaps through radio and other mass media we will find new means to communicate the Gospel.

In this forward movement in faith, the Church is looking to God for His gifts of grace, greatness and goodness. It is by grace alone that Church can have this faith to exist in the changing culture in which it has now been placed, under God. This God is both greater and wiser than man. Because His own nature is good, He therefore loves Africa. I point to Him so that we never lose our faith in Him and our sight of Him during our service, now and in the future.

Inter Lutheran Church Organisation

Thomas Musa*

We have assembled here in Addis Ababa from the far corners of the globe for the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference. The ultimate objective of all our planning is directed towards the strengthening and establishment of the Lutheran Church in Africa. Today the prevailing word in Africa is UNITY. This very building in which we are meeting is a visible symbol of the emphasis and importance given to unity in Africa at the present time, and this is true not only politically but also for the Church. I would remind this conference that we are standing at the crossroads — we need to stop and look back, reviewing and evaluating our previous meetings. We need to look forward, giving careful consideration and study to the opportunities and challenges which lie before us.

The recognition of the necessity for such a study, which places this conference at a crucial turning point, came out of the Commission on World Mission meeting in Stavanger, 1963, when the following resolution was passed:

That consideration be given to some type of inter-Lutheran church organization with terms of reference providing continuity from the 1965 conference; that the program committee be requested to prepare draft terms of reference for consideration at the conference, the draft to be first sent to the churches for consideration preparatory to taking action at the conference.

In considering this resolution it might be helpful if we seek to answer the following questions:

1. Should we continue as we have in the past with an All-African Lutheran Conference being held every five years? Is this satisfactory? If not, why not?
2. Should we have a continental organization of Lutheran churches in Africa? If so, what are the reasons for having the same; what are the aims and purposes we hope to accomplish through it; what kind of organizational structure should it have? What would be the objections to having such an organization?

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Though the resolution specifically stated that a draft terms of reference be sent to the churches prior to this conference, the program committee felt that this was premature. Rather, it was decided there was a need for discussing the item at this conference in order that the consensus of opinion of the churches could be incorporated in the draft terms of reference. It is impossible for one person to present a paper which would give the answers to questions before us. What I shall attempt to do is to place before you some ideas and questions for your deliberation and discussion.

Historical Background

Before we attempt to answer the first question, i.e. should we continue to have the All-African Conferences on the same basis as in the past, let us review the history of these conferences.

We read from the introduction of the Marangu Report that the "idea of an All Africa Lutheran Conference was first presented to the Commission on World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation at its meeting in Hoekelum, Holland, in October, 1954". The first conference was held at Marangu, Tanganyika, in 1955, and the purposes listed for that conference were:

- to try to bring all the Lutheran churches and mission fields in Africa out of isolation
- to try to have them begin to think as an African Lutheran Church
- to have them see the vision of the Christian church throughout the whole continent of Africa.

It seems to me that only one of these purposes has been accomplished — that is to try to bring all the Lutheran churches and mission fields in Africa out of isolation. The All-Africa Lutheran Conferences have provided the means of doing this as the leaders of our churches in Africa have had the opportunity of meeting together, learning to know each other, discussing common problems, and sharing ideas. I would like to take this opportunity to express appreciation to the Lutheran World Federation for making these meetings possible.

The second purpose listed was to try to have them begin to think as an African Lutheran Church. I do not fully understand just what this purpose was intended to convey; but my opinion is that if we stress "African Lutheran Church" we divide the global realm of our Lutheran faith; or to put it bluntly, this statement draws attention to nationalism. What I believe they wanted to state in this purpose was "to try to have them begin to think as a Lutheran Church in Africa". If this was the concept proposed, this aim has been accomplished in terms of doctrine, ethics and faith. However, we do not yet have a continental concept of the functional aspect of the church. That is to say — though we are united in faith, yet in respect to a given task our tendency is to be divided and to think in terms of *churches* in Africa.

The third purpose listed at the Marangu Conference was to have them see the vision of the Christian Church throughout the whole continent of Africa. My interpretation of this statement is that it alerts us to see oppor-

tunities which we have in evangelism. If we follow this statement literally we can say that we have seen the vision — the opportunities for evangelism — but we must ask ourselves if we have done anything or we just *see*! The task of evangelizing the entire continent of Africa has not been completed. Each Lutheran church has been carrying out its own local outreach, but we have no united front for mission work of the Lutheran Church in Africa. Now is the time to take action rather than passively standing by and looking, not only in respect to the opportunities within Africa but the opportunities for evangelizing which are available beyond the boundaries of our continent.

The Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference was held in Antsirabé, Madagascar. In reading the report of that conference the main emphasis was the witness of the church in a changing Africa in its political, economic, social and religious life. I quote from the report:

They met to consider the opportunities and responsibilities that lie before the Lutheran Churches in restless, revolutionary, doubt-filled but hopeful Africa.

When this statement was made in 1960 I presume the intention was to make the Church aware of her opportunity and responsibility in participating in the cry of that day in Africa — INDEPENDENCE. Independence has now become an accomplished fact in most of the countries of Africa. But the statement is still relevant to the cry of Africa today — UNITY. The political leaders have united in speaking regarding the situations which face us in Africa. The Church has remained silent, simply because we do not have an organization wherein we can speak unitedly on prevailing issues.

Should We Continue With the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences?

The All-Africa Lutheran Conference has been a forum wherein we could meet for discussion, particularly on matters pertaining to doctrine, ethics and faith. We have experienced this type of meeting and have seen the benefits — the churches in Africa are no longer isolated; the leaders have come together and know one another. There is no question but that each delegate who has attended these meetings has gained much through this experience, but we need to honestly answer the question — How much have these benefits been transplanted back into the grass roots level of our churches in Africa? After the conferences what follow-up has been done?

Are our needs met through a conference meeting every five years which is primarily only a sharing of ideas? Some would probably answer yes to this question, stating that we should not rush into forming a constitutional organization for although we have learned to know one another we still have tremendous differences among our churches, not only as pertains to church structure but also the situations in which the church lives. To create an inter-Lutheran church organization for all Lutheran churches in Africa could involve some of the churches in rather precarious situations. Is it true that the churches have understood each other to the extent that, for instance, the Lutheran church in Ethiopia would understand and appreciate the problems which exist in the Lutheran church in Tanzania?

Should We Have A Continental Inter-Lutheran Organization?

In view of the disadvantages and problems mentioned in the previous paragraph, the majority of this audience may favor continuing with the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences. But in doing so are we really making any progress towards our ultimate objective? My conviction is that we have reached a place where we can take a step further. Before us lie many phases of work of great importance, requiring united effort in order to be effectively carried out. I would briefly mention a few:

The unfinished task of evangelism, previously referred to, within the continent of Africa and in other parts of the world, which requires a united missionary effort. In view of the fact that the governments of Africa have assumed the position of neutrality, it is my opinion that the Church in Africa today stands in a unique position of having an open door before it for sending missionaries to areas which are closed to churches of other lands. Are we taking advantage of this open door?

This item cannot be passed over lightly and easily. It requires careful and thorough study, not only by the Lutheran churches in Africa but on the international scale of our Lutheran faith. When such a study is made ways must be sought of pooling the resources of the Lutheran churches throughout the world. As I see it, as a Lutheran church we confess and believe in one faith, but at the same time in practice our inclination is to think in terms of separate and individual groups. Thus we have one faith but we are divided in the functional aspect — each church claims possession of its own funds, its own personnel, its own area; and the churches are labeled as sending, receiving, young, old, having, having not, mother, sister. If we approach the proposed study along this line of thought we cannot succeed.

The Church today needs a means whereby it can unitedly speak to current issues in "restless, revolutionary, doubt-filled but hopeful Africa". The Christian councils, the All Africa Council of Churches and the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences do not sufficiently fulfill this requirement. An example is the racial discrimination practiced in South Africa. Government leaders have united and openly criticized this evil. As a church we have remained silent! It is true some resolutions were passed at the Antsirabé Conference, but I question whether they have been made known publicly. Have they not rather remained as silent printed words on page sixty-one of the report, due to the fact that we have no organization with executive power through which to speak? Under such conditions no individual church would dare to put itself forward to raise the issue.

This practice of racial discrimination in South Africa is in reality an accusation against the Christian Church, inasmuch as the teaching of the Dutch Reformed Church is one among many factors responsible for the continuation of this discrimination as the members of that church are so strongly indoctrinated into the belief that racial discrimination is biblically based. Should not we as a Lutheran Church enter into a dialogue with the Dutch Reformed Church to oppose this false teaching? Our major problem, to our shame, is the lack of a clear position in our South African churches today.

Another situation against which the Church should speak is the religious discrimination practiced in some other countries. I believe one of the duties of the Church is to warn the world that a nation which does not hold in reverence the worship of God as revealed in Jesus Christ can never respect the equality of mankind.

In the realm of theology there is a great need for fresh theological formulations consonant with the African life and thought; and a need for the preparation of Christian educational materials for the basic teachings of the Lutheran doctrines.

The Lutheran churches in Africa should work towards preparing a common liturgy and order of worship which would be an expression, both outwardly and spiritually, of our unity.

Advanced education is desperately needed in all countries in Africa. Is this not the time for the Lutheran churches in Africa to think in terms of having one Christian university, non-government-grant aided, which would provide facilities for training leadership in our church? It is extremely doubtful that any one church in Africa could financially support such an institution, but this might be feasible if it were a united effort.

Having mentioned some reasons for forming an inter-Lutheran continental organization, it is only right to also bring to your attention some of the objections:

1. Cost involved. I dare not estimate the amount required, but I am sure it would be costly.
2. Lack of personnel. It would absorb the time and energy of the relatively few church leaders in Africa, whose time and energy and ability are already severely tested.
3. Lack of efficient communication facilities. Any centralization of work requires the availability of speedy communication.
4. A possible hindrance to the great ecumenical movement taking place in Africa today.
5. The question as to what would be its working relationship with the LWF.

We have dealt with the subject of whether there should be a continuation of the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences or whether an inter-Lutheran continental organization should be formed. Another suggestion might be to have regional or continental secretariats located in Africa. If this were done we must also answer the question of just what would be the function of these secretariats and what would be their relationship to the LWF office in Geneva.

Conclusion

I would again remind you of the resolution from Stavanger, which is the basis for this paper. This resolution indicates to me a definite need for a change; and in studying and presenting before you some of the pros and cons on the issue I find we are in actuality seeking to answer the following:

How can LWF more effectively serve the Lutheran churches in Africa?

How can the Lutheran churches in Africa feel they have an integral part

in the LWF, and how can they become more effective in their contribution to the Department of World Mission?

Africa has now come to the point where the choice of walking and working together must be made. I believe an organization should be formed which would be as simple and uncomplicated as possible, yet having sufficient authority so it would effectively be an expression of the unity of the Lutheran churches in Africa. This organization should have an executive council, the members of which would be a president, full-time executive secretary, and other chosen members; a general meeting to be held every three years with the executive council taking action on matters during intervening periods.

This is the rush hour of Africa, but it may be that we should not *rush* into an Inter-Lutheran Church Organization. An analogy would be the morning and evening rush hours in America. Everyone calls it the *rush* hour, but when you enter into the rush hour traffic you in reality crawl along slowly. Without the traffic signals it would be a chaotic situation; these instruments serve to keep the traffic moving along. A working committee elected at this conference would serve as our traffic signal to indicate in which direction we should move in this rush hour of Africa. My recommendation is that such a committee prepare draft terms of reference to be reviewed by this conference prior to our adjournment.

In closing I quote from Lilian Cox in the book *Mirror Today*, "Build Unity — Melt Divisions . . . then the family feeling of the household of God will be strong around you and within you."

Report Adopted By The Assembly

Inter-Lutheran Organization in Africa

After a brief discussion following presentation of the paper on this subject by Rev. T. Musa from Tanzania the matter was referred to the Resolutions Committee for recommendations. The following report was later submitted and adopted:

The Committee reviewed the proposals outlined in the document presented by the Reverend Thomas Musa as well as the statement prepared by the Reverend Ezra Gebremedhin and additional suggestions arising out of the plenary discussion.

The Committee considered two issues:

- a) The most urgent need of the Lutheran churches in Africa in carrying out their responsibilities of implementing the recommendations of the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences.

- b) The kind of practical encouragement towards mutual effort needed at this particular time.

The Committee recorded its judgment that a centralized pan-Africa Lutheran organizational structure would not at this time make for the most efficient continuity in inter-Lutheran work in Africa, but that determined effort should rather be directed towards practical programming and common participation beginning on the national and regional level.

On the basis of recommendation by the Committee and discussion in plenary sessions the conference

RESOLVED:

That the Lutheran World Federation be requested to make available to the Lutheran churches in Africa an additional qualified staff person to devote full time to the carrying out of the following responsibilities:

- a. To assist the churches in effecting the fullest possible implementation of the recommendations of the All-Africa Lutheran Conferences;
- b. To coordinate arrangements for exchange visits of workers (teams and individuals) between the Lutheran churches in Africa with a frequency and duration to be determined by local needs (and with particular attention to Christian nurture, stewardship, evangelism and lay leadership);
- c. To serve as consultant to the All Africa Conference of Churches in order to foster a clearer understanding (among the Lutheran churches) of the purpose and programs of the AACC and to ascertain whether certain programs can be carried out most effectively on an interdenominational basis;
- d. To assist in the planning of the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference.
It was further

RESOLVED:

That a fourth All-African Lutheran Conference be held in 1970.

Plenary Paper I

THE CHURCH IN AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN CHURCHES

Martin L. Kretzmann*

In a certain sense the geographical designations in the title of this paper could be changed to designate any other continent or country. One could just as well read: The Church in America and the American Churches. With the exception of the change in location the contents of the papers would probably be very much the same.

The point of this remark is, of course, to emphasize the fact that we are all facing the same questions and problems. Every one who has seen the vision of the Church is excited and thrilled at the tremendous potential which lies in the concept of a body of people in the world, in whom and with whom Jesus Christ the Lord of all is present in his love and grace and power, totally committed to the glorious task of bringing the love of God to all men. On the other hand, one might almost say that the clearer the vision becomes the more we become concerned about the churches and the image which they present to the world, a brotherhood which often lacks brotherliness, a community which often seems bent upon destroying itself through rivalries for power, a body which is given work to do and spends its energies in combing its hair and manicuring its nails. You who are called to be the church in this continent must, therefore, not be so proud as to think that you alone have problems. There is no church on any continent which does not share this privilege with you; they not only have the same and perhaps more problems, but we all share them alike because we are all in this together. If you are hurt we are all hurt; if we cry you also weep with us. And when our Lord Jesus Christ is able to fulfill his purpose through any of us, in spite of our stupidity and disobedience, we all rejoice together and join our songs of praise with those of the angels in heaven.

I.

Let us ask ourselves a very simple question: What happened when the Church came to Africa? This is not a historical question; it is a theological

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one. It does not ask what any particular person or church or mission did; it asks only what took place on this continent when in the eternal purpose of God the Church first came here.

In order that there be no misunderstanding at the outset let me say that I am not asking what happened when God came here. It is outside the range of our knowledge to speak about what God was doing in Africa before the Church came, or, for that matter, what he is doing in those places and among those people where the Church has not yet come. This all lies in the secret counsels of God.

Perhaps we can approach our question best by taking three prominent biblical symbols regarding the Church and consider what it must mean when the Church as so understood comes into a land.

The first of these is the understanding of the Church as the people of God, the New Israel, or the new humanity.

In numerous passages of the New Testament we find the early Christians claiming that they are the true descendants of Abraham. The covenant made with Abraham and his descendants was based on God's choice of them. They were the children of promise and this precisely because they belonged to Christ. "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (Gal. 3:29). Since the covenant which God made with Israel was of grace alone, membership in that covenant was not a matter of the flesh, but of faith in the promises of God (cf. also Acts 13:16—34; Rom. 4:12—17; 22—25; Eph. 3:5—6; Heb. 8:4—13; 1 Pet. 1:10—12).

The early Christians saw themselves as taking the place of the old Israel in the plan of God for the world's redemption. This old Israel had been created by God as a unique community through a series of divine covenantal acts and revelations (Exod. 19:4—6; 29:45f.; Isa. 43:1—7; 49:1—12; Amos 3:1f.). It was to be the arena in which God displayed his mercy and grace for all the nations to see and it was precisely their weakness and unsuitability for this role which enhanced the glory and power of God. No one could fail to praise God when they saw what he was able to do with such poor material. As the bearers of his revelation of himself to them they were also elected to tell the nations of his great deeds in all the world and thus lead all men to praise him. It was this great privilege and responsibility which Peter had in mind when he wrote: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy" (1 Pet. 2:9—10). As the New Israel the Church therefore saw itself as the agent of God's will and law in the world.

But this was not all. It saw itself also as a new humanity which had been created in Christ. As in Adam all died so in Christ are all made alive. The second Adam united in himself both the creator and the creature and thus was the firstborn of many brethren, those who have received power to become the sons of God through faith in him. As this new humanity the Church shared in Christ's lordship over all creation; all things were theirs,

and they were Christ's and they could now live in the world without fear of the creature and without the necessity of worshipping it, but again as lords of creation as man was intended to be when God gave him dominion over all things in the world. They were free and because they were free they were able to serve all men in the form of him who had become a servant for their sakes.

The second symbol follows naturally on the implications of the first. If the people of God has such high privileges and great responsibilities, how is it possible that it can fulfill them? The answer lies in the presence of Christ himself in the Church as its Lord through his holy word. He is the head of the Church and from him alone it draws its power and in him alone it lives (Eph. 1:22f.; 5:23—27; Col. 1:18—20). The Church is related to God not by its own virtue or worthiness but because Christ and his word is in her. "For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord" (2 Cor. 4:5). It was the Gospel of Jesus Christ, of what God had done through his life, death and resurrection, that was the power of God unto salvation. This was the good news of the creation of the new humanity in him, of God's forgiving love, and of the promise of the presence of the Holy Spirit to constantly bring to remembrance the things of Christ through the word. Thus the power to be the people of God was a continuing power that remained with them as long as the word of God, both in its living relationship to every circumstance of life and in its visible form in the sacraments, was in their midst.

This word through which Christ is present as Lord of the Church and through which he rules the Church is not a matter only of pure doctrine or of the use of a large number of scripture passages, but the word which God speaks to his people when he pronounces judgment on their sins, offers his forgiveness and love, renews his covenant with them and promises them his grace so that they may live in this world in hope. It is this word of which Luther speaks when he writes: "For since the Church owes its birth to the Word, is nourished, aided and strengthened by it, it is obvious that it cannot be without the Word. If it is without the Word, it ceases to be a Church" (*Luther's Works*, St. Louis, Vol. 40, p. 37).

The third symbol by which we would try to understand what happened when the Church came to Africa, is the description of the Church as the body of Christ. We cannot, obviously, exhaust the full meaning of that term in this paper; perhaps we will never know the full mystery of it. At times Christ is spoken of as the body and Christians are described as being members of that body. In Ephesians and Colossians the Church is spoken of as the body and Christ as the head. It is the head which directs the body; it is the body which carries out the will of the head. Thus the Church is that community of people who are in communion with their head, the Lord, who constantly listen to his word and who are sent into the world to carry out the purposes for which he came into the world and became identified with it. As he was concerned for every part of man's life and for all the areas in which man lived his life so his body is also concerned about everything in the world which affects man. It is this relationship to the head of the body, constantly nourished and sustained through worship and

listening to his word, which keeps the body on its course and distinguishes it from all other groupings of people around some human ideals, however lofty they may be. Although it has the wonderful privilege of being, in a real sense, Christ himself, it must always remain under his judgment and correction and is thereby saved from becoming an end in itself.

When we put these three symbols together, the Church as the people of God in which Christ is Lord through his word and which functions in the world as his body we can answer the question of what happened to Africa when the Church came: there was introduced into the life of this continent a people who were themselves a living testimony to the grace and love of God for all men, who knew themselves to be in a new and exciting relationship to all of creation because they were incorporated into him who was both God and man, who were committed to serving their Lord in total obedience, and in serving him to serve all men and share with them the new life which they had received so that they also might live in their Father's world as his children, heirs to all of their Father's riches and joyously look toward the day when all which hindered their full enjoyment of God's grace and love would be taken away in the new heaven and the new earth.

Since this Church is not bound by any culture, nor related to any culture, it does not make any adjustments to whatever culture may prevail in a given land. It comes to man as the mission of Christ, to every man whether he be African, Indian, European, whether he be Muslim, or animist, or Hindu, as a man. It does not look at his color, his clothes and his culture but only at the fact that he belongs to God and must come into his sonship with all that God has already given him.

Let none of us think that this did not really happen, or that such a church does not exist in Africa today. Underneath everything we know and which seems to contradict such an understanding of the Church this reality did and does exist, not because we are in some way involved in it but because he to whom Africa belongs and has belonged since the foundations of the world were laid has been involved in it through his triumphant victory over all that alienated man from God.

II.

At this point we should ask ourselves another question: What happened when the churches came to Africa?

It is not the aim of the question to imply that the churches were not the Church, or that what was stated in the previous section took place without the churches. Both came at the same time and it is not possible to separate one from the other.

The aim of the question is rather to focus our attention on the fact that the Church never comes without the human element which is the channel through which God works in the world. The transcendent comes to us through the immanent, or, to use Paul's phrase in a slightly different way, "We have this treasure in earthen vessels".

Most of us have a fairly good idea of what happened when the churches came to Africa because it is the same thing that happened in every other

part of the world. They brought with them not only the Gospel of God's grace to man in Christ, but also a great many deductions from that Gospel as they had been developed in a different religious setting. They brought with them not only the good news of a new life in Christ but also a great many rules and regulations about what that life was to be according to what they had learned in their own cultures. They brought with them not only the great good news that man could worship the creator of all things once more instead of worshipping and serving the creature, but also liturgies, hymns, ceremonies and pews as the aids to this worship as they had developed them in their own history. They brought with them not only the teachings of the word of God but a great many other doctrines which had grown out of their relationship to their environment and may even have been valid there but had no foundation in the Word.

The list could no doubt be made longer and any one who has had some experience of working in the church in a culture other than the one in which his faith was nurtured would be able to contribute to the list. The point is that we know that this happens and, in a sense, we know that it is inevitable.

When the churches come into a land which has a culture other and different than their own they do not come into a vacuum. Forms of belief, of worship, of faith already exist there. They are alien to the churches. The faith of the latter, however, has come to them through particular forms with which they are familiar. There is no clear distinction between the form and the substance. It is only natural that they conclude that the forms which were useful in bringing the substance to them will be equally useful to other peoples. Frankly, I do not see how it can be otherwise. Granted that many, if not all, churches have their peculiarities and should have enough sense to recognize them as such, it yet remains true that some form is necessary. In their ignorance of the values behind the forms which already exist and their inability to learn these values except through long and intimate contact with the new culture, they are faced with the necessity of doing something. I do not doubt that many early bearers of the Gospel to Africa did many of the things which they did without any strong conviction that this was the only and the best way of doing them. I rather think that many earnest missionaries felt that what they were introducing was only of an interim nature, would be superseded when the Gospel became incarnate in the land and the church would find its own way of expressing its faith, life and worship in its own culture. Many of them probably longed for the day when this would come to pass so that the church would, in every sense, be part of the land and people and thus be able to speak to its own in forms which did not negate cherished and acceptable values.

We all know what has happened in many places throughout the world. The strongest opposition to changing the forms through which the Gospel first came to a land has come from those who should have been the first to favor such changes. For many of them, at least in the first generation of Christians, those who brought the Gospel to them held special places of respect and veneration. To question the wisdom of these fathers in the faith would be to question everything that they had done and to shake the very

foundations of belief. Together with this was, and still is, the feeling that the Gospel has come from so-called "higher" cultures and any attempt to indigenize the forms in which it came was, and still is, met with the suspicion that the people of the new culture are not worthy to get the best, as it is defined in the culture from which the Gospel came.

The point is, of course, that when the churches come into a land they come not only as the people of God, the community in which Christ is present and which is his body, but they also come as sociological phenomena which have grown out of and have constantly adapted themselves to a particular historical environment and a particular culture. In this sense the churches must be related to the culture into which they come. They must recognize what God has been doing there in his never-ending providential care for all his children and make it their own. They must also recognize that man has an almost infinite capacity for perverting the good things of God and using them for selfish and evil purposes and must sanctify all things through the Gospel.

It is not the intention of these two sections of this paper to place a concept of the Church as the people of God in opposition to the church as an organization, with the intention of making organization unnecessary. In this world and being the kind of people we are, we cannot do without organization and if we did not have it we would have to invent it. It is the intention, however, to sharpen our understanding of the essential nature of the Church as the mission of Christ in the world and to make all of the organizational aspects of the church's life subservient to that quality. When we understand the nature of the Church as it is depicted in Part I of this paper we will be able to look at all of our institutions and organizations from the viewpoint of their relationship to the Church's nature and function as the mission of Christ in the world. The church will then not look upon itself as the object of whatever benefits may come from these institutions and organizations but rather as the subject which uses these to express its mission to its fellowmen. If they do not serve this purpose they are not neutral; they are a definite obstacle to the mission of the church. More than that they may eventually be the means of bringing about the death of the church because they will draw its life and strength from it. Unless the church is in mission it has no source of renewing its life, not because it gets more members through the mission but because it can only save its life by losing it for the sake of others, as both the precept and example of our Lord have taught us.

III.

We have spoken much in the above sections of the Church and the churches. How shall we understand the fact that the mission of the Church does not belong to any particular manifestation of it, but is the mission of God to men, of Christ, and of the body of Christ? How does our separateness as churches fit into this truth?

We must be sure, first of all, that we understand that no organizational aspect of the Church has any right to be in mission. That right belongs to any group of people only because of their being the body of Christ, and the people of God in whom Christ dwells and rules. It does not belong to them because they are a large and respected denomination, nor because they have

the pure doctrine or the historical episcopacy, or the right administration of the sacraments. None of these by itself gives the Church the right to stand before men and say, "Be ye reconciled to God." That right can only come from the fact that God has committed the word of reconciliation to the body of Christ through which he has made reconciliation.

This must mean, secondly, that the mission in which all the various manifestations of the body of Christ, the separated churches, are engaged has only one source of power, only one means of carrying out the mission, and only one goal. The source of power is Christ the Lord of the Church, the means is the Gospel, and the goal is to bring men into fellowship with God. There is nothing beyond or beside this. If any church is doing the mission with any other power, or with any other means, or for any other goal (such, for example, as to increase its membership to be a "big" church) it is not the mission of Christ.

In the face of this must we not agonize over the separateness which has come to be such a common aspect of the life of the churches? We dare not, at the risk of being disobedient to what God has revealed to us, be indifferent to the truth. But at the same time we dare not, at the risk of being disobedient to our understanding of the nature of the church, be indifferent to that which is the greatest single obstacle to the mission of Christ in the world, our unwillingness to acknowledge our fellow members in the body and minister to them and let them minister to us.

No empirical manifestation of the body of Christ is perfect. We are all alike under the judgment of the head of the Church. And since we know that we are members of that body by the grace of God alone, and not because we are from a particular confessional heritage, nor because we have a purer doctrine than others, nor because we are holier in life than others, we must acknowledge that all other members are there also alone by virtue of that grace. We are not saved by truth; we are saved by faith and that saving faith has been created in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, "who has called us through the Gospel, enlightened us by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved us in the true faith; *in like manner* as he calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies *the whole Christian Church* on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith; in which Christian Church he daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ."

IV.

When we believe and confess this must we not acknowledge with all humility that God has given a most precious heritage to the Lutheran Church, an understanding of the nature of the Church which does not permit us to rest in our search for expressing ever more completely the real oneness which exists among all who believe in Jesus Christ? Surely, we cannot be content to let things as they are. We do not seek the glory of the Lutheran Church but ask only that God may use us so that his name may be glorified and his kingdom brought to the hearts of men. To this end may his blessings rest upon us all.

Section Paper I:1

INDEPENDENCE AND PARTNERSHIP

Kilbon J. Msomi*

The subject of independence in the Church in our times refers to a situation found in many countries where the church has come into being in recent times as a result of the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. The Gospel of love has been brought to many lands, where for centuries it was unknown, by the activity of missionaries from countries where the Church had existed for a long time.

The message of the Gospel points men to God who so loved the world that he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life. The Gospel has its foundation in the love of God who saves those who receive His message of love through faith in His Son Jesus Christ. All who believe are saved and God has commissioned all believers to witness to the world of His love until the end of the world. The Gospel makes new creatures of human beings by the power of the Holy Spirit working in their hearts. It creates a nation of God where there is neither slave nor free, Jew nor Greek, male nor female. All who are saved are brothers and God is their Father who calls upon them to witness to His love.

Fundamentally the Church is dependent on God's love and it cannot be independent of God, who is the source of faith. All who preach the love of God do so because He has commanded and commissioned them so to do. By his grace God has made men his co-workers.

Independence and Partnership as a subject does not deal with the fundamental nature of the Church and the essential activities of men in the Church. The Church is solely dependent on the love of God and all who work in the church are not only His partners but His beloved household.

The subject of independence and partnership therefore deals mainly with the relationship among agencies which serve the Church in our time. In discussing this subject the relationship between the mission agencies and the younger churches is considered. On this area there are problems which call for investigation.

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In many parts of Africa the Christian Church was born in the nineteenth century through the activities of European and American missionaries. Mission work was intensified and as a result many congregations were built up and churches came into being. This work has been continued to the present time. The missionaries coming from many countries "invaded" the African continent with the Gospel of love and using their resources have built churches, schools, hospitals and centers of higher education. In their labors they have been untiring and their work has made a tremendous impact on the lives of the people of this continent. The Gospel has been preached and many have gladly received it and have become free men in Christ. They have been freed from the power of sin have become members of the true Church of God, the communion of saints. Christ's banner has been raised in Africa.

It was, however, unfortunate that by coincidence the missionaries came to Africa at the same time as the colonists. The missionaries were sent by God to establish His kingdom in this continent. The colonists were sent by colonial powers to carve large parts of Africa and to annex them to foreign kingdoms in order to swell empires. The Church in Africa was therefore born in a difficult time. The word of God preached to the people was a power unto salvation and its effect was to bring hope and freedom. Colonialism subjected the people of the continent to foreign rule. Whether this coincidence of missions starting their work at the same time as great colonial powers came to Africa was beneficial to the work of the mission or not is not considered here. One thing is however clear. The Africans resented colonialism and in time demanded freedom from foreign rule. In their struggle for freedom, the Africans have been unrelenting. Many African states have achieved independence especially after the last world war. The movement towards independence by the Africans has not influenced politics only; it has also influenced trends of thought in the younger churches and in the whole world.

Today in Africa many churches have attained to full autonomy. They are self-governing and in some cases also self-supporting. This means that these churches, which were some time ago governed by mission boards and mission conferences, have become autonomous; they now run and control their affairs.

There are several questions which may be asked with regard to development in the younger churches towards independence:

1. At what time in its development should a church have its autonomy?
2. Would it not have been better if the churches in Africa were granted autonomy as soon as congregations were established?
3. On what basis did the missions intend to grant autonomy? Was it to be based on self-support, on a high standard of education or on the adoption of Western culture by Africans? What was the criteria of maturity?
4. Where the government of the church remained in the hands of the mission for a long time, what was the attitude of the Africans in the church to the existing state of affairs?
5. Have Africans in the younger churches made demands for full autonomy before it was granted to their churches?

6. Has there been any similarity between the government by colonists and the administration of the church by the missionaries in Africa?

In thinking of answers to these questions it must be remembered that the Church is a brotherhood, which should at every stage be permeated and dominated by the spirit of love.

The attainment of independence in the younger churches changes the situation in these churches in a number of ways. The young church becomes self-determining. It is no longer governed by the mission. The nationals become eligible for all positions in the church. If the properties are registered in the name of the mission it becomes necessary to transfer these properties to the younger church. If the younger church is fully self-supporting, then the question of subsidies from missions is not considered, but otherwise it is considered. It is decided how the younger church is to get subsidies. A clear-cut statement of the church and mission relationship becomes necessary if the relationship between church and mission ought to be properly established.

It is comparatively easy to formulate such a statement where the mission has not unduly delayed the coming of autonomy in the young church and where the mission and the missionaries fully support the idea of independence for the younger church. It is easier for the mission in the homeland to see at a certain stage that the younger church should be granted autonomy; it is not so easy for the missionaries in the field who, acting as "nurses" of the younger churches, know every weakness of the younger church.

The change in the younger church is also to some extent influenced by the political situation in the country in which the church is found. The situation is for instance quite different in independent African states from that in states where Africans have limited political powers. In independent states autonomy is readily accepted and is facilitated by the political standing of the people. For instance there are hardly any obstacles when it comes to the question of transfer of properties of missions to the church. The nationals themselves may have a better understanding of the significance of autonomy in the church in the independent states.

It is however always possible to make a statement of church and mission relationship, when the church becomes autonomous. Such statements may have to be changed from time to time. It is doubtful whether it would be ideal to formulate a general statement which would apply to all parts of Africa; it may be possible to lay general principles on which such statements may be based.

When a number of synods merged in South Africa to form what is known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa, Southeastern Region, a statement of church and mission relationship became necessary. The statement declares, among other things, that the mission shall continue to help the church to achieve her objective of evangelizing people in this region. The church has the privilege of calling missionaries to work in the church and may also apply to mission boards for subsidies. The missionaries working in the church have the same privileges and responsibilities in the church as nationals.

With regard to this clause it is also to be remembered that fundamentally

it is God who calls men to a certain land to witness to His love and win men unto God and therefore the church must have her doors open for any who can render service by making effective witness in the sphere of the church. For this fundamental cause only does the church call missionaries. Another clause deals with the transfer of properties; it states that properties owned by missions shall be transferred to the church and that certain property which may not be transferred to the church because of legal impediments will remain in the name of the missions.

The work of transferring properties has just begun and it will be some time before all mission property scheduled for transfer is transferred to the church. It is clear that the missions will keep some properties to themselves as full integration of church and mission is not envisaged, at least at present. The difficulties experienced with regard to transfer might have been minimized if the missions had in the past transferred the properties to the indigenous synods. Legally it is almost impossible now to transfer properties in European areas to our church, which as it stands now, has an African status before the law. It was not so twenty years ago.

Consultation between missions and the church is effected through the Lutheran Advisory Council, which consists of mission superintendent, church superintendent and one representative of the medical mission, with the bishop of the church acting as chairman. In this council matters of common interests between church and mission are considered and recommendations from this council are sent to the church council.

The church assembly is the governing body of the church and the assembly delegates its authority to the church council which corresponds with the Joint Council which was created after the merger of the Lutheran synods in South Africa, so that the church could deal with one body instead of dealing with individual home boards.

The church anywhere must be organized carefully if it is to run smoothly. This is necessary. The church should have courage tempered with wisdom. Above all the church needs to have faith in God if it is to fulfill its mission in the world. A church which trusts in God will certainly be mighty in the world.

Section Paper 1:2

INSTITUTIONALISM AND THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL

James Dretke*

Preaching is the proclamation of the timeless Christ to his world in time and space. An institution is the perpetuation of a line of action or a pattern of behavior from one time to another.

Preaching is the process of communicating the word to each generation in its time. Institutions often represent an attempt to interpret the word to a past generation.

Preaching is always current; institutions easily outdate the Gospel proclamation.

What place, therefore, should institutions occupy in the life of the Church? What role can they play in the Church's obedience to its mission? What are the purposes which an institution should serve? Are the institutionalization of certain God-given functions assets or liabilities for the proclamation of the Gospel? Should institutions once founded have a permanent place in the life of the Church? If not, how does the Church recognize when an institution has ceased to fulfil its purpose? Is "institutionalism" good or bad for the preaching of the Gospel?

These are some of the questions the Church needs to ask from time to time, for each generation is faced with its own world, its own problems, its own challenges. To meet these problems and challenges each generation has at its disposal institutions and traditions it has inherited from previous generations. Questions always arise as to whether these institutions have to be used as they are, or whether they can be modified so as to cope with new needs, or even discarded altogether in order that new institutions might take shape.

"Institution" and words related to it ("traditions", "customs") appear again and again in the many sociological studies coming out of Africa today. Social structure is defined as "any arrangement of persons in institutionalized relationships".¹⁾ Social change is described as "a two-way process involving the adaptation of traditional forms of social organization to new goals as

* The Rev. James Dretke is Field Secretary, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Ghana.

¹⁾ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde (eds.), *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, London, 1950, p. 43.

well as the elaboration of new institutions to cope with novel situations".²⁾ By and large, much of our movement in society is determined by institutions. While these institutions play an important role in the handing over of values from one generation to another, they can also be obstacles to the acceptance of new values and new institutions.

The Scriptures, too, have much to say about institutions. That which God has instituted — the Word and the Sacraments — stand often in a kind of opposition to man's institutions. Again and again the condemnation of God falls heavily upon man-made institutions. To a God-given institution, the Law, for example, men have frequently attached their own laws, and made of them institutions that have over-shadowed God's greater law. Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees over the eating of corn on the Sabbath³⁾, and his healing of the man with the withered hand⁴⁾ give testimony to the tension between God's institution and man's preservation of it. Jesus calls himself "the Lord of the Sabbath"⁵⁾. Paul concludes: "Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days"⁶⁾. Yet, with the coming of Jesus God does not abrogate the law: "Do we then overthrow the Law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary we uphold the Law".⁷⁾ Man's institutions fall; God's institution stands!

The Church itself is an institution. Its marks are the Word and the Sacraments. People enter its fellowship through baptism. Their call to discipleship is from the Holy Ghost operating through the Word. They give evidence of their continuing loyalty and renew their fellowship by participation in the Lord's Supper. The Church's people, God's "laos", is a people gathered out of all times and all places. These people are the body of Christ. He is the head. They are the bride. He is the bridegroom. Moreover, the Church is holy, not in itself, but it has been sanctified and cleansed with the washing of water by the word "that the Church might be presented before Him in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish".⁸⁾

As the law instituted by God received embellishment from the hands of man, so also the Church — God's institution — has been "institutionalized" by man. The denominational names we bear — Lutheran, Roman, Methodist — give evidence to this "institutionalism". The clerical collar, the ordained ministry, seminaries, church buildings, set liturgies, choir robes, the language of worship, Sunday schools, Christian bookshops, the cross — these are all part of the institutionalization of the Church by man.

Institutions help to order our lives in a world that is always in process of change. So also continuity and order is given to the life of the Church⁹⁾. But, while thus recognizing the value of "institutionalism", we cannot close our eyes to the tragic consequences that institutionalism may have upon the

²⁾ St. Clair Drake, *"Social Change and Social Problems in Contemporary Africa"*. Contribution appearing in Walter Goldschmidt: *The United States and Africa*, New York, Praeger, 1963, p. 231.

³⁾ Matt. 12:1—8. ⁵⁾ Matt. 12:8.

⁷⁾ Rom. 3:31.

⁹⁾ I Cor. 14:40.

⁴⁾ Matt. 12:10—13. ⁶⁾ Col. 2:16.

⁸⁾ Eph. 5:26f.

life and activity of the Church. History gives much testimony to the pitfalls that come as institutionalism reaches a point where institutions over-shadow the very message they are inaugurated to serve. We find the "congregation of Israel" at the time of Christ heavily institutionalized. Likewise, we find the pre-Reformation Church groaning under a heavy weight of traditions. How many of these institutions of the past had their origins in the Church's response to its Gospel-proclaiming commission? Since institutions can long survive the need that called them into existence, people can often perpetuate and long practise an institution without really knowing its origin or its meaning. One author has described this phenomenon as keeping the "programme but not the passion of a previous age".¹⁰⁾ Herein rests a danger in institutionalism.

Luther and the Lutheran confessions say much more about the weaknesses of institutionalism. "Traditions are truly snares of conscience", states the Apology,¹¹⁾ and Luther, speaking of prayer, Satan and institutions, warned against the distractions of institutionalism:

Common prayer is precious and the most powerful, and it is for its sake that we come together . . . The Christian Church on earth has no greater power or work than such common prayer against everything that may oppose it. This the evil spirit knows well, and therefore he does all that he can to prevent such prayer. Gleefully he lets us go on building churches, endowing many monastic houses, making music, reading, singing, observing many masses, and multiplying ceremonies beyond all measure. This does not grieve him, nay he helps us to do it, that we may consider such things the very best, and think that thereby we have done our whole duty. But in the meanwhile this common, effectual and fruitful prayer perishes and its omission is unnoticed because of such display, in this he has what he seeks. For when prayer languishes, no one will take anything from him, and no one will withstand him. But if he noticed that we wished to practise this prayer, even if we were under a straw roof or in a pig-sty, he would not endure it, but would fear such a pig-sty far more than the high, big and beautiful churches, towers, and bells in existence, if such prayer be not in them. It is indeed not a question of the places and buildings in which we assemble, but only of this unconquerable prayer that we pray it and bring it before God as a truly common prayer.¹²⁾

As if writing ahead of their time, the reformers spoke much about the freedom with which institutions may be established or disestablished as the Church takes root in differing localities. The Augsburg Confession stated very simply:

¹⁰⁾ Mark Gibbs and Ralph Morton, *God's Frozen People*, London, Collings, 1964, p. 46.

¹¹⁾ Apology of the Augsburg Confession, *Book of Concord*, St. Louis, Concordia, 1950, p. 100.

¹²⁾ "Treatise on Good Works", Works of Martin Luther, Vol. 1, pp. 233—237. Quoted in H. T. Kerr, *A Compend of Luther's Theology*, Philadelphia, Westminster, p. 145f.

To the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, i.e., rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike.¹³⁾

The Apology elaborated on this theme by stating "the true unity of the Church is not injured by dissimilar rites instituted by men."¹⁴⁾

The Formula of Concord affirmed:

We believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has the power, according to its circumstances, to change such ceremonies in such manner as may be most useful and edifying to the congregation of God.¹⁵⁾

To undergird this statement they argued:

The ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word, but have been instituted alone for the sake of propriety and good order, are in and of themselves no divine worship, nor even a part of it. Matt. 15:9: "In vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."¹⁶⁾

All of the foregoing has much to say to those churches who are dissatisfied with institutions inherited from their founding fathers. Because an institution is useful in Sweden does not mean that it will be equally useful in the U.S.A. Because an institution has found a place in the life of the church in Germany does not mean that it need occupy a place in a daughter church in Tanzania. "It is pleasing to us", say the Lutheran confessions, "that, for sake of tranquility (unity and good order), universal rites be observed."¹⁷⁾ But, as this may not always be possible, the confessions go on to assert that we should be tolerant of the differing institutions that develop amongst us:

No Church should condemn another because one has less or more external ceremonies not commanded by God than the other, if otherwise there is agreement among them in the doctrine and all its articles, is also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the wellknown saying: 'Dissonantia ieiunii non dissolvit consonantiam fidei.' Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in faith.¹⁸⁾

This toleration of differing institutions is scriptural. As Paul says:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one.¹⁹⁾

¹³⁾ Augsburg Confession, Article VII: "Of the Church", p. 13.

¹⁴⁾ Apology, Articles VII and VIII: "Of the Church", p. 74.

¹⁵⁾ Formula of Concord, Epitome X: "Of Church Rites", p. 229.

¹⁶⁾ Loc. cit.

¹⁷⁾ Apology, Articles VII and VIII: "Of the Church", p. 74.

¹⁸⁾ Formula of Concord, Epitome X: "Of Church Rites", p. 229.

¹⁹⁾ I Cor. 12:4-6.

There is thus every encouragement for us to be alert to movements of the Spirit within our midst. We need not be bound to any man-made institutions in our churches. We are free to discard some, adapt others to our need, create new institutions to meet new needs. There is no cause for any congregation to live in lament of traditions they have inherited. Let them thank God for whatever those institutions have done for them in the past. Let them go on in the creativity of the Spirit to shape the kind of institutions they need for the present, and let them leave for the future a heritage of institutional adaptability.

In reality, the Church ought to be continually scrutinizing her institutions, reexamining their purposes, their potentiality, and their accomplishments. "The Church is subject unto Christ",²⁰⁾ and as Paul strove to keep his body in subjection,²¹⁾ so the body of the Church must continually remain in subjection to Christ. As the Lutheran confession assert, "'He that heareth you heareth Me', cannot be understood of traditions . . . He wishes His own voice, His own Word, to be heard, not human traditions."²²⁾ From these observations we can go on to conclude that institutions need not be a hindrance to the proclamation of the Word. If brought into subjection to the Word, if used in the service of the Word, so that Christ's voice is clearly heard and His invitation obeyed, man-made institutions have a place in the life of the Church.

We need to ask: Of all the institutions, which now are assets and which are liabilities in the Church's effort to fulfill its mission in this our day? Are there any guide lines to help us re-evaluate the institutions of which we are a part, and through such re-evaluation carve out the kind of institutions we need to better fulfill our present obligations to the Lord? While we need to be concerned about the future, our primary concern is that of today and today's world. Tomorrow's "evil" will come in due course, and with it the Church's need to reassess its situation and its institutions in the light of its God-given tasks for that particular day.²³⁾

Some Basic Questions

What then are the priorities? What is essential for the Church in its proclamation of the Gospel? What are the constants which the Church must always consider in its work? Are there any institutions which can claim a permanent priority for the Church's task of proclaiming the Word? Will priorities vary from country to country or even from locality to locality within a given country? What should be the chief motivation in establishing an institution like a school or a hospital? Should it be evangelization? Edification? Service? Should church institutions like hospitals and schools strive to be self-supporting? Should they be profitmaking? Or, should they operate at cost as a service to members and mankind in general? Is there a need for a Christian primary school in an area that is well served by

²⁰⁾ Eph. 5:24.

²¹⁾ I Cor. 9:27.

²²⁾ Apology, Article XXVIII (XIV): "Of the Church", p. 74.

²³⁾ John 17:15, 18.

government schools? Is there a need for a Christian hospital in an area that is well served by government hospitals? Can the Church in good conscience turn over a school or a hospital to government or a private secular agency?

What expenditure of the Church's energy is to be directed to the peaching of the Gospel? Are service institutions to be vehicles of evangelism, i.e., is a hospital bed to be an agency for evangelization? Or, is medical assistance primarily an outpouring of love to a fellow human being in distress? Is the ladies' organization to be an instrument for evangelism, or primarily a tool for carrying out the task of edification within the fellowship? Is the school to serve primarily those already in the Church, or is it to serve those outside the Church? Whatever purpose are primary will somehow determine the character of each institution, its short and long term goals, the training of those who will cause the institution to function, its membership and many other variables.

Man functions best when surrounded by institutions. But times change and man's institutions change. Are present church and congregational institutions adequate for our task in our time?

A. *Churches.* We betray the fact that we look upon the Church as an institution by the way in which we often introduce our faith to a stranger: "Do you go to church?" It is as if being a Christian is tied up with a building and whatever is done inside that building. God's institution is the Church. Man's institutions are the churches. Can a man be a part of the Church without being a member of one of the churches?

B. *Educational institutions*

a. *Literacy programs.* Have the churches come to place too high a value on "educated" members? The shepherds were the first missionaries of the newborn Christ to the world. How educated were they? What role can illiterates and little educated play in the Gospel proclamation? Must literacy programs precede effective Christian witness?

b. *Primary school.* What is the primary school situation today? Is government support nullifying some of the evangelistic potential of the church school? Are teachers giving their loyalties to the Lord? Could Christian teachers give a more effective witness to their Lord while teaching in non-church schools?

c. *Sunday schools.* Much church education today is directed toward training our own membership in the Word. Is this healthful? The Sunday school was organized as an aid to evangelism. Children of church members were trained in their homes; children of non-Christian parents were trained in the church. When the home began to fail in its responsibility, the Sunday school came to occupy a more prominent place in the life of the churches. With this new emphasis on education within the churches, there came a need for parish halls and school facilities. Can we restore the training of children to the home? Is this scriptural idea practical in our rapidly urbanizing society with its looser family structure?

Is the Sunday school the best approach to reaching children and adults in rapidly developing suburban complexes where newly-founded congregations have little opportunity to found new schools? If Christian training can be restored to the home, should Sunday schools continue to have a place in the Church's program? What about churches with highly developed primary schools? Should such give any attention to Sunday schools? Are both necessary?

d. *Seminaries.* Are seminaries accomplishing their set-out goals? Are faculties and facilities keeping pace with the high standards we find about us in university circles? Have we reached a stage where a Lutheran Seminary of West Africa would better serve the Church at large than our paltry efforts on a national level? What possibilities for united effort confront the Lutheran Church in other parts of the continent?

C. *The professional ministry*

Is the professional ordained ministry developed in Europe and America the best approach to ministering to the multitudes of Africa's people? "There is a limit to the number of people with whom one man can work and to the number of activities he can control."²⁴) With these limitations, wherein should the pastor spend his greatest amount of time and energy — as preacher? Teacher? Organizer? Administrator? Evangelist? Are any pastors still school managers? Are the number of recruits for the parish ministry rising today? Are pastors' salaries more adequate than a few years ago? Is there any hope in the foreseeable future of staffing each congregation with its own full-time worker? Is this desirable? Can congregations pursue their calling without the leadership of a professional clergy? Does "professionalism" add an undesirable dimension to the Christian ministry?

D. *Congregations*

Is the institution of the "congregation" a help or a hindrance to the proclamation of the Word? What number of manpower hours are spent in just keeping the institution going? Do local loyalties detract from the congregation's commission to "go" into all the world? How much of the congregation's energy is expended in serving itself as over against energies spent in preaching the Word to those outside? Preaching in the New Testament, according to one scholar, is "the public proclamation of Christianity to the non-Christian world"²⁵). What place does this kind of preaching occupy in the life of our congregations? Has division into established congregations encouraged "laymen" to hand over to the clergy some of their fundamental Christian responsibilities like visitation of the sick and evangelization among the lost? What responsibilities do those who occupy the pulpit and those who occupy the pew have in common? Wherein do their responsibilities differ?

²⁴) Gibbs, *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁵) C. H. Dodd, *The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*, 1944, p. 7.

E. *Bible study and prayer*

The Word is central to our life in Christ. "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers".²⁶⁾ Does Bible study and prayer still hold a prominent place in our communal lives as Christians? It seems the further a congregation moves from its missionary origins, the more temptation there is for it to neglect the basic enterprise of prayer and Bible study. Even church councils can so much occupy themselves with the "business" of the congregation (collection and expenditure of monies, planning of special programs, etc.) that the real business of the Lord is neglected. What amount of a parish's time should be spent in Bible study? "Daily", as was the case in the early Church?²⁷⁾ Should a pastor lead all Bible classes? Or does a pastor better spend his time in leading a selected group of trainees into the Word, and then teaching others through them?

Clearly, an essential part of the Church's task is to confront the world with Christ. The fact is, however, that the Church can become so institutionalized that it no longer confronts the world. From the primary school through the difficult days of sickness on a hospital bed, from the Sunday morning worship to the Saturday afternoon youth fellowship — the Christian can become so involved in the institutionalism of the Church that he forgets and neglects his involvement with the world. In some areas, Christians can so much associate with each other that they no longer have time to confront and face the world. The Church becomes like a large monastery in which each Christian basks in the warm sunshine of Christian fellowship without having to face squarely the world that is hostile to the Gospel.

Jesus pleaded: "I pray not that thou wouldst take them from the world, but that thou wouldst keep them from evil . . . As thou didst send Me into the world, so I have sent them into the world." Should not our institutions, rather than withdrawing us completely from the world, prepare us instead for our confrontation with the world? Should we not find in our institutions a retreat and a withdrawal from the world, not just for the sake of rest, but for regaining the strength to reconfront the world anew? As such, the ongoing life of the Church would be one of gathering to scatter. We would not be "forsaking the assembling of ourselves together"²⁸⁾, nor would we be forsaking our commission as "sent ones" to the world.²⁹⁾ In all our institutionalism we can never forget that we are Christ's "ambassadors".³⁰⁾ An ambassador returns regularly to his home for rest and new instruction, but then he returns to live and work among the people to whom he has been sent. The Christian has been sent to the world. There — in the world among a people strange and hostile to him — a world that belongs to Christ, but has not learned to know Him — the Christian by his lips and with his life proclaims his Lord the Christ!

May the Christ "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" so use us and our institutions that He might ever increase, while we ourselves decrease.

²⁶⁾ Acts 2:42. ²⁷⁾ Acts 2:46. ²⁸⁾ Heb. 10:25. ²⁹⁾ John 17:18. ³⁰⁾ II Cor. 5:20.

Section Paper I:3

Lutherans, Other Churches and the Christian Church.

The third study section dealt with the topic "Lutherans, Other Churches and the Christian Church". As an introduction to this topic an oral presentation was given by Rev. Rakoto Andrianarijaona, President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Madagascar.

Reports Related To Plenary Paper I

Report A: Independence and Partnership

- I. The independence of a church is a gift given to it by God as it grows into a fuller realization of its calling and a more mature sense of responsibility to its mission. The term *independence*, however, must be understood within the interdependence of all churches in the one Church of Christ and the dependence of all members of the Body of Christ on Him who is the Head of the Body. Such independence is manifested in the ability of the church to think, act and live in obedience to the Word of God in relation to its own culture and environment. Such independence is to be encouraged, accepted, respected and fostered by the older churches. Therefore we call upon the older churches to look upon the newly independent churches as new instruments of God in their specific locality and field. Such independence does not assume that the church does not need brotherly help of other churches in fellowship, advice, personnel and finances.
- II. Any help or assistance given by an older church directly or through a mission agency to a younger church is to be seen as an act of communion and cooperation of two churches as fellow members in the Body of Christ. Partnership is an understanding between the churches (young and old) to pray and work together in the unfinished task of bringing the Gospel to the whole world. This means being partners in the mission of the Church to the world. The churches in this partnership should plan this work jointly and carry it out together. Furthermore, the older churches should try to benefit in this partnership from the potential of the younger churches and mutually with them exchange experiences, ideas and personnel.

It was

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the older and younger churches be urged to foster such partnership and be encouraged to utilize the services of the Lutheran World Federation in working out the practical aspects of the partnership in any given area.
2. That the LWF be requested to review the present scope and function

of the Commission on World Mission in view of the understanding of mission as a global obligation.

3. That recalling the request of the Second All-Africa Lutheran Conference the LWF Department of World Mission "draft a master statement that might be used in formulating agreements for cooperation and help between African churches and churches or societies of the West that supply help in personnel and finances" (Antsirabé Report, page 96) and realizing that a draft has been prepared by LWF/DWM for use by the churches,

it be further

RECOMMENDED:

That LWF be requested to enlarge the document to include statements regarding the basic issues in implementing a working relationship between the churches and put it at the disposal of the churches concerned.

Report B: Institutionalism and the Preaching of the Gospel

Although we should remember that institutions may arise purely out of the Church's concern for the needs and nurture of individuals, we shall in this report be limited by the terms prescribed in the title of the section which relates institutionalism to the preaching of the Gospel.

1. There is no easy answer to the question "What is an institution?" An institution could be defined as a pattern of behavior or a line of action that is perpetuated from one time to another. A building — by the very fact that it stands with some permanency — is something of an institution. Even then, a building is not an institution unless it serves some purpose. What goes inside the building may be the institution rather than the building itself.

Secondary schools, Bible colleges, primary schools and hospitals are institutions in that they represent a particular line of action perpetuated from one time to another. The subject of "institutionalism", however, is much bigger than what we know commonly as institutions associated with buildings. It does not appear that Jesus and His intimate Twelve wore any special robe to distinguish them from common people — yet we do. The robe, therefore, is a kind of institution.

Holy communion is not a man-made institution, but *once-a-month* communion is.

Church discipline is not a man-made institution, but *methods* of church discipline are.

The Church — *all* believers and *only* believers — is not a man-made institution, but *churches* are.

Ministry is not a man-made institution, but our *patterns* of ministry are.

2. The fact that God has worked through our man-made institutions does indicate what God can and does do through earthen vessels, but we must be on our guard lest we equate our institutions with God's. Our institutions have a way of so intertwining themselves with God's institu-

tions that we frequently find it extremely difficult to distinguish the one form from the other. But our institutions must always be servants, and we must always be on the alert in the ongoing struggle to discover whether our institutions are still servants to the Word and our Lord, or whether they have come to overshadow the Word and glorify man.

3. In reality, the Church ought to be continually scrutinizing her institutions, re-examining their purposes, their potentiality, and their accomplishments. "The Church is subject unto Christ", and as Paul strove to keep his body in subjection, so the body of Christ must continually remain in subjection to Christ. As the Lutheran confessions assert, " 'He that heareth you heareth Me' cannot be understood of traditions . . . He wishes His own voice, His own Word, to be heard, not human traditions." From these observations we can go on to conclude that institutions need not be a hindrance to the proclamation of the Word. If brought into subjection to the Word, if used in the service of the Word, so that Christ's voice is clearly heard and His invitation obeyed, man-made institutions have a place in the life of the Church.
4. There is in the Holy Word and in the Lutheran Confessions every encouragement for us to be alert to movements of the Spirit within our midst. We need not be bound to any man-made institutions in our churches. We are free to discard some, adapt others to our need, create new institutions to meet new needs. There is no cause for any congregation to live in lament of traditions they have inherited. Let them thank God for whatever those institutions have done for them in the past. Let them go on in the creativity of the Spirit to shape the kind of institutions they need for the present and let then leave for the future a heritage of institutional adaptability.

May the "Christ in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" so use us and our institutions that He might ever increase, while we ourselves decrease.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. That we express our deep appreciation and thanks to God for all the blessings and benefits received through schools, hospitals and other institutions of the Church. We acknowledge with gratitude that they have played and still do play an important role in proclaiming the Gospel to the people of Africa and in offering to the people of our churches an opportunity to serve their fellowmen.
2. Whereas the Church as the people of God is sent into the world to proclaim the Gospel;
Whereas the world in which we live is in rapid process of change;
Whereas institutions help to order our lives in this world of change, providing continuity and order in the life of the Church, and also effective procedures for rendering service of love, but
Whereas institutions may also hinder the Church in her adaptability to proclaiming the Gospel under changing conditions, therefore it is

RECOMMENDED:

- a. That each church, synod and congregation ought to re-examine every institution which forms a part of their church life, including the very organizational structures of the churches themselves;
- b. That they seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discover to what extent these institutions are actually serving the Church in the fulfillment of her mission of Christian witness and service;
- c. That they should seek to determine whether — in the Gospel proclamation — present institutions are best used as they are, or whether they need to be modified so as to cope with new challenges, or whether they should be discarded in order that new institutions might take shape;
- d. That the churches, synods and congregations give careful consideration to priorities in terms of stewardship of time, personnel and money;
- e. That they make every effort to revive useful institutions, which have lost their evangelistic or charitable purpose, and finally
- f. That they make a continuing effort to keep every institution in subjection to Christ and His Word, as through these institutions they proclaim His Gospel and manifest His love with their lips and with their lives.

Report C: The Lutheran Church, Other Churches and "the Christian Church"

The topic was approached by attempting to answer five questions.

1. *What is the unity of the Church?*

The unity of the Church is found in Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom all believers are children of the Father. Our unity is the gift of the Holy Spirit, a unity in which we as Christians live with all other Christians. Yet it is also something which we must appropriate and express, and in which we are not complete (Eph. 4:3 and 13). Our unity in Christ is not to be equated with organizational union of churches. Yet our organizational diversity is often an evidence of the incompleteness of the unity of the body of Christ.

2. *Why is there a call to unity?*

The call to Christian unity is expressed most clearly in Jesus' high priestly prayer, in which He prays for the unity of His people so that the world may know Him as the one sent from God (Jn. 17:21). The Church is called to unity therefore so that our witness to the world of Him may be clear and our defence against the world may be strong. God's mission in the world requires the unity of His Church.

The truth is one; therefore where there is disunity there is a failure in apprehension of the truth. Our call to unity then is a call to search for a clearer apprehension of the truth that is Jesus Christ.

3. *What keeps the churches apart?*

We are guilty of causing disunity in the Church in several ways:

- a. Where we misunderstand and misinterpret, where we add to or reduce the message of Scripture, there we set obstacles to unity.
- b. Pride in whatever form, be it confessional, national, class, personal or ecclesiastical, keeps us apart.
- c. The fear of losing our traditions, which is lack of faith, prevents us from receiving greater blessings. (Some theological books enjoy attacking others more than proclaiming the Gospel.)

But sometimes also faithfulness to our convictions and to our honest understanding of God's word and our calling as Christians hinders us from a kind of union which does not express true unity.

4. *What do we as Lutherans regard as the prerequisite to church union?*

We do not believe that the unity of the Church is dependent on unity in organization or in ceremonies (although these may be of practical help). We do believe that a faithful Christian church must submit itself to the Scriptures as the only source and norm of Christian teaching and practice, and that church union therefore must be based on agreement in the essentials of the Gospel as the way of Salvation and in the Sacraments.

5. *What is the way to unity?*

We are agreed that we can help to heal the disunity of the Church in several ways:

- a. By careful and prayerful study of the Scriptures and criticism of our church life in their light;
- b. By a friendly and understanding attitude toward other churches and a willingness to learn from them;
- c. By serious dialogue and a common search for theological agreement with other churches;
- d. By co-operation with other churches in all matters in which we together can serve God's mission among men.

It was

RESOLVED:

That the above statement be called to the attention of the churches here represented, and further, specifically be it

RECOMMENDED:

1. That since we have nothing that we have not received by grace alone, the Lutheran churches in Africa seek to enter into dialogue with other churches that we may share this faith with them.

2. That the churches examine themselves and the Confessions to find whether it is really the essentials of our faith that hinders union with other churches, or simply our outward customs and organizational problems.
3. That, in order to assure a common search for church unity, the Lutheran World Federation be asked to continue to gather and distribute reports to all our churches on all interconfessional conversations held in Africa; and that the LWF be asked to arrange for consultations among the Lutheran churches in Africa in the field of faith and order, at the regional and continental levels.
4. That the Lutheran World Federation be asked to clarify its position regarding possible relationship to a church resulting from union between a member church and a non-member church or churches.

Plenary Paper II

THE NURTURE OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Ezra Gebremedhin*

I. *The Problem*

A. *General Observations*

This paper arises out of a concern for the life and mission of the Church. It is an attempt to induce a restudy of the Church's ministry to believers and of the means that have thus far been used by the Church for the nurture of God's people.

It is a clear fact that there are many people on the registers of our churches than are not actively engaged in the life and mission of the Church. Many churches are under-staffed. The few pastors of the Church are torn between their pastoral duties and other tasks of an administrative nature. In many cases the Church has to plead with believers to come and help in the tasks which confront the Church. At times the Church has to act like a wise salesman to try to arouse interest among its member and to involve them in the work of God's kingdom. Apart from the fact that this sort of salesmanship is very tiring, its results are often short-lived. The temporary interest aroused among members fades under the pressure of duties carried on without deep conviction.

The Church longs for a spontaneous participation of its members in the work of God's kingdom, but such participation seems to be next to impossible. No one feels this fact more keenly than the minister of the word of God and the shepherd of Christ's flock. The paradox, of course, lies in the fact that our church registers do not give the impression that there is a shortage of people. What our churches lack are Christian people who live with a sense of a calling and who take an active part in the life and mission of the Church. The why of this phenomenon and an attempt to bring about a solution will be the main burdens of this paper.

B. *Specific Problems*

Only an unbroken vitality in the spiritual life of the Church can provide men, means and a message both for the Church and the world. The fact that

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Christianity among our churches waxes and wanes with generations is, therefore, one of the reasons for lack of manpower and a spiritual thrust in our churches.

It is a common fact that numerous young people "graduate" out of the Church after passing through various stages of education that the Church provides them. It appears that for such youth religion is a phase that relates to one phase of a person's life and not the current that should run beneath the entire span of a man's life. The drainage in manpower that results from such an exodus from the Church is severe.

Many church members seem to find complete satisfaction in their educational and professional successes, and have hardly any time for the Church. Such people would be quick to say that they have a great respect for the Church. This may be true, but such respect is small comfort indeed for a community of believers who have espoused an unpopular cause in a world in which they are overwhelmingly outnumbered. We are thus faced with a situation in which the Church enjoys the respect and reverence of its members but longs in vain for their services.

II. Causes

A. *New Opportunities*

The Church in Africa is going through a period of transition. Its first members were gathered from rural communities and its ministry was geared to inhabitants of rural areas. Apart from its role as proclaimer of the Gospel, the Church has always been a patron of education and, consequently, a precursor of the modern life. Its enlightened youth are now spear-heading into the new technological age. The Church, which whetted the appetites of youthful minds and opened the way to the pursuit of knowledge, diligence and industry, now finds itself bewildered and forlorn. The advent of modern education and the technological age appears to have created great distance between the Church and its members. The Church has become a "launching pad" from which its youth are thrust into a land of new opportunities — a land from which, alas, many do not return. A few examples may help to make this clear.

New educational and professional opportunities appear to have brought a "practical atheism" among numerous church members. Many college-educated civil servants who were brought up in Christian homes and had a close connection with the Church in their early years now display a "benevolent indifference" towards the Church. The faith of their earlier years seems to have given way under the onslaught of modern education and the attractions of material comfort. These people have been gradually emptied of their religious awareness through neglect of church attendance and through association with colleagues for whom religion is a vestige of primitive days. Such persons may still tolerate regular worship services but see no point in the spontaneous expression of the devotional life. They may respect the Church for the intellectual, social and economic advancement that it has ushered into the nation's life, but have no use for the Church that sings and prays spontaneously.

Furthermore, there is the "practical atheism" fostered by professional advancement and promotion. A new society, a new set of mores, views, expressions, taboos and mutual understandings await the man who is thrust into the society of the elite. In obedience to the unwritten rules of this new society a person seeks to conform to the least common denominator that binds the members of his new society. In the process his evangelical convictions often are silenced.

A sizeable portion of the membership of the Church is composed of "artisans": mechanics, builders, carpenters, plumbers, shop-keepers, etc. These artisans are children of a new age. They left their rural homes many years ago to become partakers of the benefits of a new era. One thing marks their life: an intense devotion to their work. Some of them are so devoted to their work that they have very little time for the Church. These people are neither atheists nor enemies of the Church. They simply feel that to make a going concern of one's vocation should be the guiding principle of a person's life.

If one were to characterize the people who have been described above, one could call them "earth-bound". They are victims of a preoccupation with life — apart from God. The world with all its good things seems to have a firm hold on them. Many of these people are respectable men who labor to accumulate knowledge, to build up a home, and to bring up children. They treasure the connection with the Church regardless of the tenuousness of this connection. However, as far as the ongoing life and mission of the Church is concerned, these people are ineffectual.

B. Poor Equipment of Believers

St. Paul pictures the Christian life as a warfare. In the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians he describes the nature of the enemy with whom Christians have to contend and prescribes different types of armor. One of the primary causes for loss of church members to the world is a lack of proper equipment in the teachings of the Church and in a thorough preparation for the life in the world. This deficiency is evident even among those members who are regarded as the "devoted sons" of the Church. A number of people within the Church preserve a strong traditional attachment to the Church. This is no doubt a great asset, but without a clear knowledge of the teachings of the Christian Church and a firm belief in these teachings, no amount of loyalty to the Church can withstand the onslaughts of the powers of evil. As it is, the religious views held by many such people reflect a very vague type of religious education started in the days of their youth but never carried on to a stage at which the main teachings of the Church could stand out in clear contrast to the religious generalities held by the average man.

Lack of adequate instruction and spiritual equipment partly accounts for the many "casualties" among evangelical students who come into the bigger towns from country schools. Such students begin by putting up a brave fight for "the faith" but gradually sink into the spiritual exhaustion of those who neither dare to reject God altogether nor have the strength to follow Him enthusiastically.

Sometimes marriage among members of the same church brings about a drastic change in the religious lives of the individuals concerned. New domestic concerns completely outweigh and crowd out any concern for an active participation in the life and mission of the Church.

C. The Church — A Poor Hostess

A number of those persons whose names are still on the registers of the Church but who hardly ever appear at church may be classified as "the come-in and go-out" variety of Christians. These people joined the Church because they were genuinely interested in what the Church had to say but fell away because they were not accommodated. They were not made to feel at home. Tribal, social and economic reasons have played an important part in the attitude of this class of Christians.

We also have the "uneasy stay-ins" — those people who do not feel too comfortable in the Church but who have too lively a conscience to abandon the Church simply for that reason. Though such people attend church regularly, they prefer to be left out of all activities connected with the Church.

The Church must be prepared to bear part of the blame for the condition of the two classes of people described above.

D. The Church — A Ghetto

For years the Church has carried on its work within the confines of its own premises and it has used its age-old methods. The Church has kept itself at a good distance from the world, in spite of the fact that people live in the world and spend only a minute fraction of their lives within the confines of a church. People speak the language of the world, associate with worldly people and are engaged in mundane activities. In the midst of them stands the Church which is centered around a professional man, the parson; a professional day, Sunday; and a professional building, the church. Although some people might argue that the professional nature of the Church and its preservation of old ways provides for a focus of stability in a world of flux — one must realize that a church that lives to preserve its identity in numerous little ways may have missed the purpose of its existence.

People are looking for help in the context of their daily callings; on the field, in homes, in factories, in shops, etc. Only the church that moves out can begin to meet the needs of such people.

E. An Inadequate Ministry

From the foregoing paragraph it should be clear that the reasons for an anemic spiritual life within the Church and for the continuing drainage in manpower, are to be found both within the Church and outside of the Church. Numerical shortage of ministers as well as inadequacy in the training of ministers are the main "internal" reasons.

The "main external" may be expressed as the ravages of the "new era" ushered in by modern education and the growth of urban and sub-urban communities outside of the limits of the old, self-contained parishes of the

Church. It is to be noted that apart from weakening the life to the Church, the advent of a new era has burst the limits of the old parishes and scattered the members of the Church far and wide. This development has accentuated the need for a vast increase in the number of the Church's ministers.

However, the perennial problem of the shortage of ministers within the Church, and the immensity of the task that awaits the Church among its widely scattered members, indicate that our conventional views on the ministry may be inadequate and that they may have to be revised.

Since the word and sacraments are the treasures of the entire Church, any concept of the ministry which places a wedge between Christians and the means of grace should be severely checked. The sanctity that is rightly attached to the office of the ministry has resulted in some altogether undesirable attitudes even among the most devoted members of the Church. Christians who are starved of spiritual care and who long for the sacraments nevertheless would find it unthinkable to receive the ministry of the sacraments from a spiritually mature but "unordained" man. In many African churches the ministry of preaching is open to any Christian layman, but the ministry of the sacraments, the liturgy of the services of the Church and the benediction are the exclusive domain of the ordained man. One would not need to be disturbed by such attitudes and practices if the cautions that are implied in these practices and attitudes were based on the proper understanding of the meaning of the office of the ministry — as a scripturally supported and prescribed division of labor in the divine economy. The disturbing fact is that a great number of Christians feel that the efficacy of the means of grace is dependent on the office of the ministry and not on God's continuing and efficacious presence among His people. A thousand lay Christians in a locality may have to spend months without the ministry of the sacraments for lack of an ordained man among them. Here we have the paradox of a community of God's people — designated as joint heirs with Christ in the Bible, sitting mute among the treasures that God has given them — afraid to touch the holy things that might spell death if handled in the absence of an ordained man.

The main cause for this state of things is not the rite of ordination or the office of the ministry, both of which are scriptural and commendable, but the *professionalization* of the ministry. In short, the one notion that has wrought havoc in the life of the Church is the notion that one cannot qualify to become a minister of the word and the sacraments unless one abandons his work as banker, clerk, farmer, doctor, soldier or teacher, enroll at the seminary and finally gets the title "reverend" tacked to his name. The fact that among a community of a thousand Christians there are a thousand possible variations of the one overall ministry of the Gospel is foreign to most Christians in our churches.

It is sufficient to say that the professional ministry as we have it today, though not anti-scriptural, is not the pattern set for us in the scriptures of the New Testament. There should be as many possibilities for the ministry of the word and sacraments as there are sound Christians within the Church. The actualization of these possibilities is the task of the Church in our day. This task is the key for the launching of an effective program of nurture

for the many members of the Church who have been flung far and wide as a result of changing times.

III. *Goal*

A program of Christian nurture should attempt to make any Christian community aware of its history in relation to the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob — the God of Jesus Christ and the God of the entire Christian community. For us who are gathered here, the goal of any program of nurture should be a Church steeped in the Bible, the catechism, and the hymnbook. We have the word and the sacraments with us. Men, talents and means are at our disposal. The Holy Spirit who can mobilize all these things into an effective missionary tool for the gathering and nurturing of people is with us. It remains for us to gird ourselves and prayerfully launch forth a consistent relentless and uninterrupted program of Christian nurture covering a man's life from the cradle to the grave. Only such a program can ascertain men, means and a message to the Church in all generations.

IV. *Solutions*

A. *A Broadening of the Office of the Ministry*

The Christian ministry and the problem of Christian nurture are inseparably bound up. Therefore, an adequate solution of the problems connected with the ministry are basic to a successful program of nurture.

It has already been stated that the members of our churches no longer live in self-contained parishes where the Church could minister to them even with its limited number of pastors. Christians have been scattered far and wide. Thus, only a broadening of the office of the ministry can meet the demands of nurture on an ever-widening scale.

It is the writer's conviction that this can only be done by the institution of a non-professional ministry on a wide scale. In the pursuit of his "secular" calling, the non-professional minister can penetrate territories of human activity which might be quite inaccessible to the full-time minister. The non-professional minister has opportunities to move among a variety of professions, in different places, and at all times. If a definite pastoral responsibility has been placed upon him, such a person would, no doubt, use his contacts with other people as an opportunity for the edification of his Christian brethren.

In our day premium is placed upon youth and educational accomplishments in the matter of selecting or calling men for the pastoral ministry. These two requirements are, no doubt, of great importance. However, the common New Testament picture of a pastor is that of the man of profession, who is married and well settled in his community and who is in no way dependent upon the church for his livelihood. The only educational attainment that is required of such a man is that he hold fast the faithful word and that he be apt to teach it.

Only a non-professional ministry carried on in the midst of men's daily callings and amidst the informalities of everyday life can begin to meet the heart cries of God's children who have been drawn away from the confines

of the professional church by the summons of a new age with all its promises. Only through such a ministry can the Church meet the challenge to speak to new situations in a creative manner and thus avoid the charge of being a ghetto. In relation to the theme of our conference, a non-professional ministry might be the best way to keep the Church a living Church in a changing society.

B. Establishing a Biblical Context for Christian Nurture

We have already noted that one of the factors that hinders Christians from participating actively in the life and mission of the Church is a preoccupation with life in the purely secular sense. It is quite evident that a proper program of nurture should attempt to correct this preoccupation and set life and the pursuit of an earthly career in the proper perspective under God.

A cursory study of the book of Leviticus will give us a panorama of the closely knit system into which the religious, the social, the economic and the political life of Israel fitted. The entire life of Israel was under the command and the organizing hand of the living God. Life in Israel was not divided into a religious and a secular sphere. The fruit of the ground, the cattle of the field, and the first-born were regarded as gifts from God as equally as was the Torah. The program of nurture among the people of Israel was as real as the sweat that accompanied toil, the bread and wine that supplied the family table and the grain and animal flesh that were placed on the altar of sacrifice. Israel's relationship to God was reinforced by hundreds of concrete acts, rituals, rules and regulations. Each emotion in the life of the Israelites had an avenue for expression before God and before man.

It is clear that we cannot begin to construct a religio-cultural system simply by means of rules and regulations. Such a system can only develop over a long period — out of the practical needs of a community that lives with a keen awareness of God's sovereignty over all of life. However, Israel's history should remind us of the unity of life under God. Among our churches the commonly assumed dichotomy between secular and religious life should be relentlessly eradicated. The Church should realize that a Christianity detached from life in all its details is doomed to fail. Hence, in any program of nurture, an attempt should be made to relate life to God as the giver and sustainer of all the concrete details of life.

In this respect cautious but decisive steps should be taken to impregnate already existing cultural institutions, customs and festivals with the message of God's creative and redemptive acts.

Within this religio-cultural context the religious sensitivities of Israel did wax and wane, but never did Israel lose its consciousness as a people with a common calling, a common experience, of the mighty acts of God and a common destiny. The inclusion of all of Israel's life under an overarching theocratic system was one of the greatest treasures of Israel.

C. Choosing the Main Avenue for Christian Nurture

a. Literature — The Silent Minister

Literature has always been one of the most effective vehicles for the

implementation of programs of nurture. The numerous literacy campaigns that have been launched in different parts of Africa indicate the premium that is placed upon the ability to read. The appetite for reading that is evident among numerous church members provides an opportunity for the supply of literature on the main teachings of the Church. The demand for literature on a more advanced level is increasing among adult church members and among students in the higher institutions of learning. An open door awaits the Church in the area of the distribution of literature.

b. *The Home — A Focal Point*

A university-trained young man recently made the following statement to the writer: "What has preserved me in the Christian faith is not the availability of sophisticated apologetics for various points of Christian doctrine which I have held in doubt at various times, but the experience of a regular drill since my youth in the things of God. Bible reading, prayer, the singing of hymns — these have imperceptibly built up within my soul a fortification which no amount of criticism of the Christian faith could tear down."

The home should be a focal point in any program of Christian nurture. However, it is evident that the majority of Christian families do not have a regular period for family worship. Very few couples read books of a devotional nature and discuss such books seriously. Children do not have the benefit of hearing bed-time stories from the Bible. Some parents seem to feel that Bible reading and prayer are the private domain of the minister.

Special effort should, therefore, be made to make the Christian family an effective medium for Christian nurture. This can only be done by setting an example and giving constant encouragement to parents.

D. *The Need for House-cleaning Within the Church*

a. *The Sunday School*

Perhaps no area of the work of the Church has been neglected as its program of instruction in Sunday schools. This may be due to the fact that the people involved in instruction are young people and children. Perhaps we have the notion that little children do not deserve anything that is prepared thoroughly. Surely we Africans have enough awareness of the value of proper upbringing to be able to see the tremendous importance of a very well-worked out program of Sunday school instruction for our children. This matter deserves our strictest attention.

b. *Confirmation*

This very crucial point in the life of the youth of the Church is not taken with the seriousness that it deserves. It is almost inconceivable to think that young men and women can pass through confirmation instruction and the actual rite of confirmation without having been confronted in a very vital manner with the claims of God and of His Church upon the lives of youth. Here is one area where the Church is definitely wasting its talents and where it needs to take a good second look at the methods that it uses in giving instruction for confirmation.

c. *Crucial Time in the Education of the Youth of the Church*

In his book *The Christian Ministry in Africa* Bishop Bengt Sundkler states: "The most fertile (and yet the most neglected) recruitment period are the teens and the twenties — top forms of secondary schools and colleges." Although this statement is made about recruitment for the ministry, it can be applied to any type of recruitment for work in the Kingdom of God. It should be taken as a guide-line for a program of Christian nurture, especially in the type of program in which we aim to create responsible Christians within the Church.

d. *The Sacraments*

The Church should make a strong effort to surround all the rites of the Church with meaningfulness. Baptism and the Lord's Supper should be presented in as imaginative and meaningful a manner as possible. It is interesting to note that the first communion service was held at a home. In light of this fact it is most saddening to note that the proportion of communicant to non-communicant baptized members in most of our churches is quite low. The Church, through its ritual observances, has introduced a gulf between the people and the communion meal, which, though it gives us high gifts, was constituted in the home by means of the bread and wine that supplied the table of the humblest of families. It is absolutely important to relate to these awesome rites of the Church, the ordinary, joys, sorrows and the informalities of the domestic life which need not be sacreligious.

e. *Crucial Times in the Lives of Church Members*

The Church should make an attempt to use the crucial times in the lives of its members for the furtherance of Christian nurture. The rite of confirmation, courtship, marriage, baptism and funerals provide unique opportunities for this purpose. It should be realized that man's basic emotions are at their most vital states at such times, and these basic emotions are some of God's greatest gifts in the preparation of man's heart for the reception of the Gospel. These emotions provide a readiness, which no number of organized formal rites within the Church can produce. God has given us these occasions. We should apply God's message to them.

f. *Worship*

We have to look at our worship services anew. Embedded in the heart of every African, the writer believes, there is a tremendous desire for a certain type of liturgical worship. On several occasions, members of the writer's church have stated that they missed the chanting of the pastor during the ordinary Sunday service. For many of these people the liturgical chants house the messages of the Gospel. Some of these people have already forgotten the detailed doctrines of the Church which they took up in confirmation classes, but by means of the chants in the liturgy they remember some basic teachings of the Christian Church. It would be folly to pass such questions and longings in the hearts of the members of the Church without considering what is really necessary for a meaningful worship in the Christian Church.

A broadening of our conception of the word of God might be necessary to make worship meaningful. We all agree that the written and proclaimed word of God is the greatest treasure that the Church has. In this respect the Evangelical Church is, indeed, the Church of the Word. However, it should be remembered that not all of what is spoken in church is necessarily the word of God even though those who speak the word start by quoting the word of God. Some sermons are mere chatter. On the other hand, God can and has spoken to us through the visible word, the water of baptism and the elements in the sacrament. Man is created to live by hearing and also by seeing and touching. We should not forget the fact that man also lives and is nurtured by the seen word, by the touched word, by the fellowship of the saints, by the kiss of peace, and by the washing of feet. Let us, therefore, reinstate the worship structure which gives the Christian man an opportunity to worship fully.

None of the recommendations that have been made in this paper are new. In different periods of the life of the church individuals with vision have voiced their concern for an effective program of Christian nurture and initiated means for the implementation of such a program. A classical example is the writing of the catechism by Martin Luther as a result of his painful awareness of the state of ignorance in which he found the followers of the Reformation. The benefits accrued from the catechism are countless and this little book will very likely remain a basic tool for the instruction of the faithful.

However, new steps should be taken to produce further means of Christian nurture — means that have the durability of the catechism and the breadth, applicability and adaptability demanded by changing times.

Hit and run methods of tackling the problems of Christian nurture are bound to fail. The results from such efforts will be fragmentary and short-lived. Therefore the Church should envisage a long-range, comprehensive, graded and uninterrupted program for the implementation of Christian nurture. Since no single church can produce a program of such massive proportions, ideas on Christian nurture have to be pooled from many sources.

It is the writer's hope that the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference will show its concern for the initiation and implementation of an effective program of Christian nurture by setting up a body to carry on a long-range study on this subject and present its recommendations to the churches of Africa.

In our day, many feel that the main hindrance to the spread of a vital Christian life both among believers and non-believers is the simplicity and the unchanging nature of the Christian message. These characteristics may indeed be stumbling blocks to the man of the world. However, the writer contends that the main problem is not the nature of the message of the Christian Church but the lack of a consistent, progressive and relentless proclamation and demonstration of this message at all times, in all places and under all conditions of life. Only such a persistence can embed the word of God in the thoughts, in the language and in the acts of people. Then, surely, there will be men, means and a message for the propagation of the glorious Gospel among men. May God grant us to be effective tools in the nurture of His people.

Section Paper II:1

THE MINISTRY OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

Vernon Toso*

The place and importance of the ministry of word and sacraments in the nurture of the Church is brought to our attention by the well known dialogue that took place on the shores of lake Tiberias. Our risen Savior's concern for the nourishment of his people is heard by the repeated commission to Peter: "Feed my lambs — tend my sheep — feed my sheep!" By his death and resurrection he had secured an everlasting food supply for all generations of mankind. The Apostle Paul explains the nature of this food and the methods of distribution as he appeals to the Corinthians: "All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation . . ." (II Cor. 5:18). Of this passage Dr. Leonhard Goppelt says in an article in *Lutheran World* ". . . it is certain that for the whole New Testament only that proclamation of the word which is concretized in the sacraments gathers and sustains the congregation. To carry out this task of proclamation is really the one ministry, the service, which is given and entrusted to the church."¹).

Our Lutheran confessions speak with clarity on the place of this divinely instituted ministry for the life of faith. Article V of the Augsburg Confession echoes the thoughts of Romans 10:14 when it says: "In order that they may attain this faith the office of the ministry was instituted." The office bearer is sharply defined by a report on the doctrine of the ministry: "The minister is not a priest with an indelible character upon whose ministrations of the sacraments the layman is dependent. Neither is he just another member of the congregation. But he stands before the congregation as the bearer of the office of the word and sacraments upon which the congregation is dependent. It is however, the living Word upon which the congregation is dependent, and it is this which empowers the sacraments. It is, therefore, the living Christ who must be brought to men in the 'mediated immediacy' of word and sacrament."²)

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¹) *Lutheran World*, Vol. XI, No. 4, p. 421.

²) Minutes, The ULCA in America, 1952, pp. 553f.

This definition of the office bearer needs to be kept in mind during a discussion of the ministry. In order that we may avoid confusion at this point it may be well to review it in relation to the positions on the ministry which it refutes:

1. The office bearer (rite vocatus, clergy, minister) is a priest with an indelible character, a distinct class, superior to the laity. This becomes clergy *as over against* the laity. This position has contributed most toward making the word "clergy" filled with a meaning of spiritual overlordship.
2. All Christians are the office bearer. This is based on I Pet. 2:9 which, when translated from the Norwegian into an African language becomes, "We are all pastors". It is a position taken by volunteer mission groups in opposition to those who challenged their "rite vocatus". "A real change for the better occurred only after the call concept was based on the Lutheran principle of the universal priesthood of believers, activated by Pietism."³) There are ordained pastors, but the meaning of the office is obscure.

The office bearer is not a distinct class with higher rank of spirituality but one who is called out from the universal priesthood of believers to fill the divinely instituted office. The clergy *within* the laity, the special ministry within the general ministry, the ministry to build up the ministry.

Luther definitely attacked position 1. on the basis of I Pet. 2:9, but to defend position 2. as a Lutheran principle in defining the office bearer is a misunderstanding of Luther. Luther insisted that no one should arrogate to himself that which is the right of all. Out of the priesthood of believers one must be chosen to bear the divinely instituted office, God's gift to the whole body of believers, for their upbuilding: "Calling is not to be despised, for it is not enough for a man to have the Word and pure doctrine, but also he must be assured of his calling, and he that entereth without this assurance, entereth but to kill and destroy. For God never prospereth the labors of those that are not called. This is therefore our comfort which are in the ministry of the Word, 'that we have an office which is heavenly and holy', to the which we, being lawfully called, do triumph against the gates of hell."⁴)

"Our office has now assumed a very different character from that which it bore under the pope; it is now a very grave nature, and is very salutary in its influence."⁵)

The importance of this office in nurturing the flock has not been fully appreciated in the formation of the ministry in Africa. In the statistics for the Lutheran churches in Africa and Asia it is interesting to note under the column concerning the national staff that the number of "other paid evangelists" outnumber the clergy in Africa by ten to one. There are 1,040 clergy and 7,049 "other paid evangelists" serving 5,349 congregations.⁶)

³) *Lutheran Churches of the World*, Augsburg Publ., Minneapolis, p. 233, but note 231f.

⁴) A Commentary to St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, pp. 2f.

⁵) Preface to the Small Catechism, 1529.

⁶) *Lutheran World*, Vo. XI, No. 4, p. 483.

One report brings the information that one pastor has 160 of these evangelists under his supervision. A typical report from a parish in south Madagascar states: "There are fourteen outstations in this parish; six of them are served by catechists, the other eight have lay leaders for their Sunday morning service."⁷ The International Missionary Council's *Survey of the Training of the Ministry in Madagascar* (1957) describes the condition in this way: "The catechist is carrying on a pastoral ministry though he has neither the theological training of pastoral schools nor official ordination to his ministry." The laymen are pointed out as carrying on the ministry in areas not readily frequented by pastors, and, finally, "Members of the Soatanana revival movement have been carrying on a true ministry through preaching." For those who may wonder who the "other paid evangelists" might be, we can get an idea from such reports. They are catechists, laymen, revivalists, and, if we can derive any meaning from statistics and such information, it is from these workers and not the clergy that the basic diet of the church is offered.

Building the ministry on I Pet. 2:9 rather than on the divinely instituted office of the Word is a hazardous position to take. The void created by obscuring the office is quickly filled by various form of ambitious innovations of human piety which usually redoubles its efforts after it has lost sight of its goal.

One of the pre-Reformation ideas on the ministry which Luther attacked was that any brother monk could preach, but only the priest could conduct the mass. Luther's thorough repudiation of this can still be seen in the churches built by pioneer Norwegians in America where the pulpit is expressively placed above the altar. Have the mission methods of those thoroughly Lutheran congregations unwittingly reverted to that which their lofty pulpit so pointedly denies? Behind the facade of churchly names such as evangelists, catechists and lay preachers, the pulpit is open to anyone on their mission fields that can hold forth with a moral exhortation, but only the ordained can administer the sacraments. As though it takes four years of seminary training to learn to distribute the elements in communion!

Pushed into an explanation for this we point out that it is necessary that a pastor guard the sanctity of the altar lest a noncommunicant participates. The altar, not the pulpit, becomes the place for disciplinary action. To help support the pastor in this, rule upon rule has been carefully worked out for him in the church law. We will not belabor this point here since it will, undoubtedly, be brought up in the section on church discipline. It is necessary for our study to point out that in this system the office bearer has become first and foremost an administrator of church law, not a preacher of the Word. Church authority rather than being invested in the office of the Word (Art. XXVIII Augsburg Confession). "He that hears you hears me", is taken over by human regulations. Deprived of its vital role of guiding the flock, preaching loses its pastoral function. The pulpit can, as a consequence, be turned over to anyone. It has no longer any relation to the office bearer.

⁷) Dogmatic Class Notes from Lecture by Dr. George Aus, St. Paul Lutheran Seminary.

This, however, does not produce an out-going active laity. Preaching from the pulpit becomes the only place related to a Christian making his witness. The congregation's activity turns in upon itself by centering around a building. In the church building constant exhortations are given to be doing the work of the church. In order to determine exactly what this term meant to a class of seminary seniors, they were given ten minutes to write down whatever came to their mind at its suggestion. Church work was to clean the church yard, restore broken windows, dust the church's furnishings, keep the organ in repair and raise money to pay the church worker. The way to raise money is to sew in the shadows of the church building on Thursday afternoon, have church sales Sunday morning after the service, and remind even the heathen not to forget their offering when they come to church. To sum it all up, the Christian witness is separated from one's daily vocation. It becomes a certain pious part of one's life which is dedicated to the functioning of a distinct pious system centered around a church building and the activity therein.

Rather than considering the office bearer as an obstacle to an active laity, let us consider the possibility that his presence is God's plan to make his people alive and active. Rather than a ministry activated by piety, let us try to understand our original definition of the office bearer and its significance to the laity.

The congregation becomes dependent upon the Word, first of all. It becomes the object of nurture, not the subject of it. It is the living Word in the midst of the congregation that builds it up, nourishes it, makes it alive. The living Christ speaks to the congregation through the minister whom it has appointed in obedience to God's command. The congregation is totally dependent upon the Word for all its life and activity. If the sheep are not fed, they are dead or dying. Evangelical preaching is the answer to the church's need in any generation, in any location, in any nation. If the body of Christ hears its Master, all its members become alive. The only reason for a well-trained ministry is that the Word be rightly preached that the Church be awakened.

Where the Word is rightly preached the whole Church does become alive. The father becomes a bishop to his children, the farmer becomes a faithful steward of the Lord (the same Lord who fed the 5,000) of his cornfield in the knowledge that his is also a most sacred task. The coal miner speaks in the darkest corner of the mine to his fellow miners about Jesus who is the light of the world. The simple, clear sermon heard the Sunday before continues to echo in every area of labor through the members of the congregation in their daily vocation. "The church is always gathered, on Sunday for worship, then out to work."⁸) Christ's love for the world radiates out through his body, the living Church. The church is no longer a building, but people bursting with the good news of salvation in Christ Jesus their Lord. This is an out-going laity — not an ingrown piety — that sees all of life as sacred, and all work done in faith as pleasing to God.

⁸) Annual Report from Manafiafy District, Madagascar, 1965.

This is the fruit of right preaching. There is no other God-given method whereby a church will become alive. The laity that has been properly nourished is alive.

The office bearer is God's gift to the congregation. Let us be alert to recognize this gift in every congregation and permit every church to have a complete ministry. Too many of these "child churches" and "other paid evangelists" are but a circumvention of God's grace and an evidence of lack of faith in the Holy Spirit's power to use these earthen vessels in his employ. God is able — as the Apostle Peter was led to note with some amazement (Acts 15:6—11) — to place a witness in the midst of the heathen nations, give them the Holy Spirit, and cleanse their hearts by faith, even as he has done with us, without distinction. Elders were committed to the Lord in every town for this ministry (Acts 14:23). Luther recommended that one be chosen from the congregation because if all were to baptize the baby he would drown.

In many instances, this is practically what we have been doing except that we have not been willing to recognize God's office bearer. We have piously settled for a half-hearted caricature of the churches we, in our paternal concern, would rear these children, but in the process, deny the Holy Spirit his proper office. In the case of the pastor with 160 outstations there could be 160 complete congregations, each with a full ministry of word and sacraments in their midst. There could be 160 elders entrusted with this ministry. Anyone who can preach can certainly distribute the sacraments. The present pastor could build his co-workers up in their ministry rather than dash out with the sacraments occasionally. Given the right to be a congregation with food in their midst the members will come alive. They will respond and grow.

These elders will have to be members of their village. Too many areas in Africa cannot be burdened down with a "full-time worker". They will work out some help for their elder as his position grows in importance in their midst. The ministry will grow with the congregation it serves, and it will be fed as it feeds. The possibilities of special training classes for this ministry during the slack growing seasons of the year are unlimited. The seminary-trained pastors could give an on-the-job training constantly.

This is certainly not an original idea; it is simply calling attention to the fact that the Lutheran concept of the ministry has been given little chance to show its inherent mission power. It would answer our two needs: more nourishment for the flock, and more ministers. It would be in obedience to God's plan for extending his kingdom. It would require faith in the Holy Spirit's leading. It is, after all, he that calls, gathers, and enlightens as the Gospel is preached, the Gospel, which when set free from all human pious manipulation, is a wind, yes, a storm.⁹⁾ That we may attain to this faith the office of the ministry has been divinely instituted. "The church has God's command to appoint ministers and deacons. And because it is a great a consolation that we know that he will preach and work through men and

⁹⁾ Erling Danbolt, *Evangelists Frie Løp*.

¹⁰⁾ Apology of the Augsburg Confession Article XIII, 13.

those who have been chosen by men, it is good that this choosing of men be highly praised and honored."¹⁰) The church is to be nurtured in order to be alive. It is for this reason God has placed in her midst the ministry of word and sacraments. "Feed my sheep!"

Questions

1. Why is the preaching of the Gospel such a vital function in the church?
2. How does God give the gift of the office bearer to the congregation?
3. How does our attitude toward the position of the office bearer effect the formation of the ministry?
4. What is the proper relation of the office bearer to an active laity?
5. What is the origin of the Lutheran stress upon a well-trained ministry?

Section Paper II:2

EDUCATION FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING AND STEWARDSHIP

Zephaniah Gunda*

Since Christ's great commission was given to his disciples: "Go therefore and make all nations my disciples; baptize men everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19—20) the Christian Church has responded to this commission and the fruits of her labors are evident in every nation of the world today. Because the eternal word of life has been proclaimed by Christ's followers since the first Pentecost Sunday we have a world-wide communion of saints, priesthood of believers in the household of God. We thank God for the men, women, youth and children who are members of His household.

But before us today comes the question: "Has the Church gone beyond the sphere of 'making disciples' and truly entered into the sphere of 'teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you'?" In many individual congregations this work is being done unto the glory of God. But what about the other congregations? If this matter of *teaching* has been really taken seriously by the Church, then why is there only one Christian out of every three people in the world today or as in my country of Tanzania one Christian out of every five? Why are the Christians so often weak in their witness? Why are non-Christian groups receiving more converts per year than does the Christian Church which proclaims a living, resurrected Lord, a way of eternal salvation, a hope and joy that passeth all understanding? If we have been concerned about the task of teaching our people then why do we find so many Christians who are "babes in Christ" when they should be mature men? If the Church has been aware of her responsibility to teach "in the power of the Holy Spirit" then why do so many, when under the onslaught of social pressures and secular education, fall away from the fellowship of the Church? If the faithful teaching of the Word of God has truly been carried out, why is the witness of so many Christians today weak to the point of their being a stumbling block rather than "light and salt in the world?"

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These questions are heart-searching — they are difficult to answer — solutions to them cannot be given immediately. But these question must be frankly studied and discussed by Christians in Africa and around the world if we are to build a Church whose foundation is laid in Jesus Christ. I do not attempt to give concrete answers to these questions in this paper, but rather I want to challenge you to see the role the Church should be taking in educating her people for Christian living and stewardship. This topic is intricate and this paper does not permit us to enter into all of its spheres, but let us begin by considering the Church's function.

Teaching has been one of the main functions of the Church since the first Pentecost Sunday. The authority to teach has come from God Himself. Jesus said: "Full *authority* in heaven and on earth has been committed to me. Go therefore and make disciples . . . and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you (Matt. 28:18b—20).

But a command to teach was not all that Christ gave to his followers. He also told them: ". . . Your Advocate, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will call to mind all that I have told you" (John 14:26). Our helper in the teaching program of the Church is the Holy Spirit Himself. Do we remember this when planning the parish education program of our churches? Our teaching must help the Christian to see that the Holy Spirit is his helper in all aspects of life whether it be at home, at work or at play. Man is as a triangle for he has body, soul and spirit. All three areas of man's life must be touched by the Gospel or he is an incomplete man. In my country many use the three-legged stool in their homes. When one leg is missing it must be repaired or the stool is of no value. This stool reminds us that our teaching must be inclusive or a man's life will not be properly balanced.

Where shall we begin with teaching or educating our Christians? To me the church is the first place of instruction. Some may disagree with this statement and say that Christian instruction begins in the home — and I whole-heartedly agree. Certainly in homes where the parents fear and love the Lord their God the first place of instruction for a child is in the home. But unfortunately Christian nurture in many homes of the African Christian today is a foreign subject, thus it falls to the church to nurture her people in the Word of God.

Within the framework of a strong parish education program, directed by the Holy Spirit, we can begin to accomplish our goal of nurturing our people. All of us realize that parish education includes Sunday school work, but should it not go beyond this? Unfortunately many of our Sunday schools in Tanzania include children only to the age of ten or thirteen years. After that the children drop out, for Sunday school is as "child's play". Is this attitude present because the hour of Sunday school is a wasted one in their lives? To make our Sunday schools more dynamic we need to have qualified Christian teachers — teachers who know Christ as Savior and Lord of their lives, and who feel the call to teach children. Weekly or monthly teachers' meetings and regular refresher courses should be conducted to help the teachers grow in their ability to understand and teach the Bible truths.

Another arm of parish education is the religious instruction periods in our primary schools. In Tanzania the primary school curriculum includes a religious instruction period. As a church we must seize these excellent opportunities of teaching our children and pointing them to Christ the Savior and Lord of Life. Our church primary schools can be a very strong arm within our church if the teachers themselves are living witnesses before their children. As an Education Secretary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanganyika — Central Synod, I have discovered again and again that where the Christian teacher is a living example of the redeeming power of Christ, then the converts to Christianity within that school are more numerous than in the Christian schools where the teacher is a stumbling block. The Church has a tremendous open door before it in countries where religious instruction is included in the curriculum and its importance is seen when in a given group of Christian youth in our country approximately 50 % say they made the decision to follow Christ in primary school. Let not the Church be asleep in training good teachers for this task, in providing for them refresher courses and in putting into their hands literature that can help them in their teaching. We face a serious problem in my country with respect to a lack of literature and teaching aids for Christian instruction of children, youth and adults. What our church needs today are trained leaders who have caught the vision of the importance of education for Christian living and stewardship and who produce materials for use in the church's parish education program. This literature must be Bible-centered and lead our Christians to a face to face encounter with the Living Lord. The literature needed today is Bible studies, Christian educational helps for Sunday schools, religion classes, confirmation classes, youth work, women's work, men's work, etc., material on witnessing, Bible reading programs for the Christian family in their home, for private use, etc. These are just a few suggestions. Each country will have its own particular needs.

Christian adult education is another important aspect of the Church's parish education program. Herein is a large field of work for unfortunately many of our Christians do not understand their relationship to God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the Church. Consequently many attend Sunday services but the worship service is meaningless and the sermon does not speak to their need. Attendance at the Lord's Supper is spasmodic because they do not realize the meaning of Christ's invitation to partake of his body and blood. Stewardship is poor for the understanding that God has created all things and has entrusted man to be His stewards of all is not realistic. Participation in church activities is often almost nil for the vision of his responsibilities in the priesthood of believers is not present. *Why?* Is it because the parish education program in their earlier days was poor? This could be the reason, but more often than not it is because in their present life they are not receiving sufficient instruction in the Word of God to help them "grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). In our women and men's organizations, through mid-week Bible studies in the church or in the homes, the Word of God must be taught in all its strength and truth. (John 17:17.)

I am convinced that there is no other way to begin educating our people

for Christian living and stewardship than to start with the Word of God which is the foundation for all of life. We cannot expect our Christians to stand firm in the rapidly changing society of Africa today unless they put on the whole armor of God which is His Word. We must proclaim Christ crucified in our teaching as well as preaching or the Church will be as another secular organization. And the cornerstone of this teaching lies within the Christian ministry — we need pastors who see that their first responsibility is that of teaching the Word of God. I realize that the Church of Africa faces an acute shortage of pastors and thus this work cannot always be done by ordained men. With this in mind then it behooves us to train our evangelists in Bible schools so that they can carry on in areas where a pastor is not available. This problem has too wide a scope to even touch in this paper, but let us remember that solid Bible teaching must be our foundation in educating our people for Christian living and stewardship.

This brings me to the education of Christians with respect to stewardship. What is stewardship? In defining this term I like to think of it as an act of caring and using that which has been entrusted to you by someone else. The origin of stewardship is in the Old Testament. The Christian principle of stewardship of treasures, time and talents is the outgrowth of the fundamental teaching of Jesus concerning a man's obligation to make any needful sacrifice for the progress of God's kingdom. (Mark 10:17—22; Luke 19:8 f.) Since God gave to man all that He created for his use (Genesis 1:24—29) and since we are His through creation (Psalms 100:3), we are then stewards of the very God of Gods and Lord of Lords. Thus in thanksgiving to Him for all He has bestowed upon us, God expects that we will return unto Him His rightful due. This does not only include our treasures, but our time and talents as well.

Within the Church today it is difficult to get our Christians to serve or give as the Lord of hosts has commanded. If God commanded His people of Israel to give a tithe of all the land (Leviticus 27:30, 32) and they lived in the Old Covenant, how much more does He expect of us today who live in the New Covenant Age? I feel that one reason why our Church is still so dependent upon outside assistance, both financially and personnel-wise, is that our Christians have not caught the vision of what it means to give oneself completely to the Lord. Paul counsels us in Romans 12:1: "Therefore, my brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to Him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for His acceptance, the worship offered by mind and heart." A man is not fully grown in the Lord until he has given to the Lord his whole being — body, soul and spirit — time, talents and treasures.

How can we educate our people for Christian stewardship? Again I return to my belief that the basic foundation is the Word of God. If Biblical examples of how people gave of themselves in order to serve the Lord (i.e. Exodus 35:5—29; 36:2—7; Judges 5:2; II Cor. 8:2—5) are coupled with teachings regarding Christ's willingness to give of Himself for our sakes (John 10:10; I Peter 2:21—25), then the stewardship program in our churches would go forward.

Stewardship education is not an easy task for people are slow to respond to what God expects of them. Patience, love, determination, persistency are needed and if we are faithful to teach the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of our people. I am convinced that the people of Africa are able to give more to the work of the Lord than they now do and they will give of themselves if they are properly taught. If the vision that all is the Lord's — our silver, gold, cattle, grain, our very lives (Haggai 2:8; Psalms 50:10—12; I Cor. 6:19—20) was realized by our Christians many more of our churches could be self-supporting. Perhaps the majority of our people do not have the monetary means as those of other nations, but we have our cattle, land, harvests, etc. There are also more and more people receiving salaries who must be challenged to give. The task before us is great — let us pray that the Holy Spirit will so work through us the leaders, that the peoples' hearts will be opened and they will surrender their complete lives to the Lord. Herein I place before you the greatest challenge of all — to pray without ceasing until our people have seen the glory of the Lord.

And for those who have sensed the stewardship of their lives we must be ready to put them to work for the Lord. We must help our Christians lift their eyes beyond their local needs and extend a hand of help to others. In our Central Synod we have been challenging our people for the past few years to give to the work of missions in two different areas of our Synod. Men have volunteered to go into these areas as evangelists; laymen and women together with pastors have gone in car caravans with clothing and food that the Christians have collected to help those less fortunate than themselves. This experience has brought a rich blessing to our people. (Acts 20:35.)

Participation of adults, youth and even children in evangelism programs should be encouraged. Let us encourage and establish programs of visitation to our prisons, hospitals, dispensaries, in the non-Christian homes, in the lax Christian homes, to the shut-ins, aged, the person in trouble, the sorrowing, the lonely, the discouraged, etc. It will be at the time that the Christians begin serving others that their eyes will be lifted from their private domain and Christ will be served through those in need. Involving all of our people in programs of learning and serving together will mean sweat and tears, but it will enable the Church of Jesus Christ to go forward marching victoriously.

My friends in Christ — the task before us in education our Christians in Africa regarding Christian living and stewardship is very great. Let us therefore pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us so that we may fulfill the commission of our Lord: "...and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Section Paper II:3

THE CONGREGATION AND FAMILY LIFE

Judah Kiwovele*

The family, as Pastor Gebremedhin points out in his paper, is important for Christian nurture. In this section, I limit my speech to the following items: Sunday school, youth work, students in schools, women's work, diaconia and the forms of worship. The importance of these items for this section is that they are means through which the congregation and family are nurtured in our church in Tanzania.

The family life is intimately linked to that of a particular congregation as a whole through the instruction of children on Sundays concerning the love of God to all men in and through Christ. This means of Christian nurture is what we call Sunday school.

The Sunday school program has been and is still a great blessing to the Christian life of families and congregations. The children are confronted at this early age by the fact that God is love. He loves more than even our parents. They are prepared by their families and congregations to grow in the spiritual atmosphere of the people of God. This becomes the foundation even of the scriptural and Christian instruction they will receive in their baptismal and confirmation classes. They are also prepared to participate more in their family devotions than they would have done had they not attended Sunday school Christian instruction.

They influence children and parents of the homes which they pass as they go to and from their Sunday school instruction. They sing or recite certain scriptural passages which they might have memorized in their study classes.

Since these children come from different homes of a particular area, they work to cement the unity of the congregation in that locality. They also grow to respect all the parents of that area as if they were their own parents. This, to some extent, influences the society in general and parents as well as the Christian congregation for the blessings bestowed on their children, through Sunday school Christian education.

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Most of those who teach, though not all, have come to realize that they are blessed in their life through what they teach. They teach themselves as they prepare to teach children in Sunday school.

On the other hand, there are parents who are, whether purposely or not, uninterested in Sunday school. They do not persuade their children to go to Sunday school. Sometimes it happens that even those parents who are devoted members of a particular congregation prevent their children from going even though the children themselves would like to go. What is wrong with the parents in relation to Sunday school? How far is this related to the instruction or those who teach? Are the methods used in Sunday school lessons relevant or not? Is this, perhaps, caused by the families themselves? How far are mixed marriages of different religions the cause of this?

Youth work is a means of Christian nurture of families and congregations. Here young people and even young couples participate in scriptural, domestic studies and discuss different problems. This, in the long run, has proved to be a great blessing to their families and to the life of the congregation to which they belong. In the youth work they are prepared for approaching family and congregational life and responsibility. There are times when young people from different congregations meet together. This helps to cement the unity of the young people of that particular church, district, synod or diocese. We are now looking forward to when our Lutheran Church in Tanzania will bring together representatives of this work from different areas of our country and church. This will, I hope, help to bring the awareness of the actuality of the unity of the church to which they belong, and which is part of the Church they confess.

In their meetings, they enrich one another through their personal sharing of their personal confrontation with Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, their Savior. Sometimes they bear witness to pagans around them, going in groups. Their witness has sometimes drawn in their parents and relatives who are pagans and even those who have slipped away from the faith. They participate, in certain congregations, in the maintenance and evangelism of the whole congregation by setting apart part of their contribution for it. They, in this way, participate in the ministry of their congregation and through it of the whole Lutheran Church in Tanzania. They share the stabilization and the missionary enterprise of their church.

In our Sunday school, some of those who teach have been or are still participants in youth work. They are prepared through it for leadership in the church and the society at large. Some even become good leaders in the government and continue to be devoted members of the Christian Church.

Despite the fact that through this youth work program of our church families and congregations are blessed, there are problems which we must not overlook. Youth work is new, it started not many years ago. Some parents wonder about the purpose of this program, but now this is decreasing. To most parents it is strange to find girls and boys play together, and at times a boy and girl walk together to and from their meetings. They want to preserve that which is accepted as good custom,

that a boy and a girl should not walk alone, but they should be with other boys and girls. Sometimes parents and the young people disagree with their leaders with regard to the quality of teachers, the time of their meetings, and the parents having different religions, the boy or girl does not know which way to follow. How far is the conservatism of our customs to be maintained? What standard are we to use to judge customs and cultures?

Students attend church, government and private schools. There are periods for religious instructions in all schools. This helps the families and congregations to see that their children and young people get Christian nurture through the instructions which are conducted there.

Most of those children who attend Sunday school instruction are found also in religious instruction classes in different schools. It is not unusual to find that children and young people whose parents are devoted members of the different congregations attend religious instruction in schools.

In secondary schools where students come from different churches and religions, Protestant religious instructions are given on an interdenominational basis. The interdenominational ties of the Church are strengthened. These young people are sometimes gathered in regional or even territorial meetings where different areas of the Protestant Church in Tanzania are represented. When they complete their studies some become devoted members of the congregations and leaders both in the church and the nation. Most of the students at our Lutheran Theological College, Makumira, have, in one way or another, been participants in the Student Christian Fellowship Association. They continue to be members even while they are at the college.

It is not unusual to find that the interest in religious studies decreases as children grow. There are some who say that those who teach have not been well trained theologically to be able to meet the spiritual need of the students, and some say they do not have good Christian nurture at home. But there are those who even say that there is secularism which draws them away from the faith. What is the remedy then?

The women's work that is conducted in every congregation has contributed a lot to the life of families and congregations. These women hold Bible studies and domestic studies. Sometimes competent leaders, both missionaries and national leaders, are invited to conduct Bible studies and answer questions they ask, theological as well as practical ones. They also get acquainted with one another, and actualize the unity they have at the particular congregation or congregations. They even learn to conduct women's devotional meetings. These meetings are held on an interdenominational basis in certain areas.

This strengthens the family devotional life and influences the whole family life to be centered around religion. Those women who have pagan husbands have, at times, drawn their husbands to the Christian faith through their witness.

This does not happen in the same way in every congregation. There are Christian families who are far from the meeting places and they are hampered by domestic responsibility, e.g. grazing animals and so forth. Sometimes they become discouraged when they find that studies interfere with

their customs and they even think that they are taught what they do not need to be taught, that they are better taught by their customs than the new ways of life. This is so because there are congregations where the leaders of this work are missionaries and perhaps have not yet enough familiarity with the life of the society and customs.

We have diaconia work in one of our dioceses, the Northeastern Diocese. This institution cares for those with mental problems. Some of the mental patients come from our different congregations. They come from Christian families. It also cares for orphans. This work of mercy cultivates in the minds of the people thankfulness to God for this love that is actualized to them through the Christian ministry.

This ministry has drawn even national Christians to offer themselves to serve in the institution.

Finally let us say that the forms of worship that are used in the church service have stimulated the Christian members in their devotion to God. The Western forms of worship, the hymnals, the catechisms are a good heritage of the Christian Church. These forms have cultivated family devotions. Sunday school, youth work and women's work, forms of worship derive from the Western forms. They are a great blessing to the Christian Church in Tanzania and, I hope, even in other countries.

A few Christians, as Africa rediscovers itself, long to praise God in their own forms and terms. They are tired of swallowing everything in the Western forms of worship and services. The truth is unchangeable, but the forms should be relevant to the African situation. What shall we say?

Reports Related To Plenary Paper II

SECTION I

Report A: The Ministry of Word and Sacrament

I. The Need of the Proper Nurture of the Congregation

The Church lives by her communion with Christ, realized by the means of grace given by Him through the Church's ministry. Unfortunately there are many congregations in Africa today which are cut off from the sustaining principles of spiritual life because they lack the full ministry in their midst. Thus their inner vitality is weakened and their evangelistic outreach is hampered. Often Western patterns of ecclesiastical offices not applicable in the African situation have been followed uncritically and have therefore delayed the evolution of a properly functioning Church.

It was

RECOMMENDED:

That the churches be urged to reconsider their traditional policy with regard to the prerequisites for ordination and to the institution of the ministry in the ecclesiastical structure. Every so-called outstation should be transformed into a full congregation in the sense of Confessio Augustana VII. This means they must be equipped with authorized preaching, richness of liturgical life, regular administration of sacraments and responsible pastoral care.

II. Oneness and Diversity of the Ministry

God nurtures His people through the ministry of Jesus Christ, who grants to them to participate in His office. This is manifested by the richness of spiritual gifts which make every Christian an active member of His body with a specific function (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4). These spiritual gifts result in various distinct but coordinated offices within the ministry of the Church. The comprehensive and leading office is the function of the pastor, the shepherd of the flock, who is responsible for the proper feeding and order of the congregation. He must not monopolize all functions of the Church, but the offices should be related to his and he should inspire and equip his co-workers to

take their full share in the ministry. Much harm has been done by indiscriminately asking anyone to preach without ascertaining his proper spiritual gifts and without equipping him for this responsible task of exercising the killing and vivifying power of the Word. Here a clear distinction also must be made between preaching in authority, teaching and witnessing.

It was

RECOMMENDED:

That the churches pay attention to the possibility of creating a variety of offices, to each one of which a specific task is assigned under a clear commission, and that everything is done to prepare and nurture such people for their ministry.

III. *A differentiated Standard of the Pastoral Office*

In view of the present situation in Africa a two-fold consideration is necessary.

- a. The growth of the Church in number and responsibility, her missionary task in the African states of today with their rising standards of education necessitates the highest possible theological standard of the clergy.
- b. The shortage of pastors compels us to consider other possibilities to meet the spiritual starvation of the congregations. Even today there are many situations in which academical excellence is not the first requirement, but where faithful service of a mature, humble Christian personality can win and guide many people.

It was

RECOMMENDED:

- a. That the churches do their best to raise the academic standard of their theological education—possibly by merging smaller theological institutions into new (perhaps ecumenical) ones of higher level — and to launch intensive and extensive recruitment schemes;
- b. In areas of emergency: that the churches consider the possibility to meet the present emergency situation by a temporary "second avenue" to the pastoral ministry, that is by ordaining experienced and reliable catechists and evangelists;
- c. That the churches pay serious attention to the possibility of a "tent-making ministry", that is to select, in view to ordination, church members in secular occupations who are faithful, apt to teach and well thought of by outsiders (I Tim. 3). They should be trained on a part-time basis over a long period;
- d. That the churches work out plans by which the formally trained ministers of the Church in brotherly cooperation can undertake ongoing programs of in-servicetraining for those who have not had formal theological training.

IV. *Inter-Church Cooperation*

Whereas the above mentioned problems are basic to most churches in Africa, be it

RECOMMENDED:

That the churches communicate the results of these actions to the Department of World Mission for transmission as information to all the churches and that the Lutheran World Federation pay attention to the theological and financial implications.

V. *Appendix to Report A*

1. The Steering Committee referred to Section I the request of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa-Southeastern Region that attention be given to the possibility of more uniform clerical vestments in all Lutheran churches in Africa.

It was

RECOMMENDED:

- a. That LWF be requested to undertake a survey about clerical vestments in use in the different regional churches and communicate the material to all churches concerned;
 - b. That the question of unified clerical vestments be studied on a regional basis and that LWF be asked to make proposals ready for the next All-Africa Lutheran Conference.
2. At the same time the members of the study section felt the desire for a common Lutheran liturgy for all Lutheran churches in Africa.

It was

RECOMMENDED:

That the LWF be asked to study the possibilities for a common Lutheran liturgy for all member churches in Africa.

Report B: Congregation and Family Life

As the theme indicates our immediate concern is related to the congregation's role in the building up of Christian family life.

Many Christians in Africa can testify that the Gospel has brought a completely new spirit in family relationships, both between man and wife and between parents and children. On the other hand, there is ample evidence that factors such as urbanization, industrialization, migratory labor, excessive drinking and our own failure as congregations have created the complex problems that exist today in many families in our midst.

In order that our congregations may be increasingly instrumental in fostering Christian family life we make the following

RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. *Home*

1. That in the preaching and teaching strong emphasis be laid on the fact that the home is the local point of Christian nurture, and that

the daily example of both father and mother is basic in all such nurture;

2. That daily family worship be encouraged in the home of every church member. As means of facilitating this we strongly urge:
 - a. That the committee on literature or other relevant body in each church prepare suitable devotional material;
 - b. That even when such material is not yet available there should be daily family worship utilizing the resources we have, i.e. prayer together with the Bible, hymnal and catechism;
 - c. That from a very early age the children be given an active part in family worship through prayer, Bible reading and singing;
 - d. That each church worker has family worship in his own home, and that he makes this an object of teaching and demonstration in home visitation, congregational meetings, youth meetings and confirmation classes.
3. That the congregations be reminded of their responsibility for the spiritual nurture of baptized children living in non-Christian homes. As one means of implementing this we recommend the establishment of Christian "kindergarten". For example, Christian women can be encouraged to gather the children near them for two or three hours of daily Christian instruction.

B. *Sunday School*

1. That strong efforts be made in each congregation to interest the parents in having their children active in Sunday school by:
 - a. Visiting the parents;
 - b. Giving the children items of interest such as attendance awards, cards, lesson papers which they can show to the parents;
 - c. Having a special parents' day at which the children present songs, drama and recitations.
2. That a specific committee in each church be entrusted with:
 - a. The task of preparing graded curriculum materials for Sunday schools. (The example was cited of one church which has graded materials in the vernacular which can also be used for family worship, thus tying the Sunday school and home closer together.) Churches are encouraged to make use of available Sunday school materials;
 - b. The task of providing training for Sunday school teachers.
3. That consideration be given to the appointment of a full-time religious education secretary.
4. That congregations be encouraged to establish branch Sunday schools where church members may invite the children of the neighborhood for instruction at suitable times.
5. That where pastors and evangelists have not yet given the responsibility of caring for the Sunday school to members of the congregation they be urged to do so.
6. That classes be encouraged for youth and adults as well as children.

C. *Youth*

1. That the following proposals from the Antsirabé Conference be recalled to the attention of the churches:
 - "a. The LWF is requested to study the possibility of establishing an all-Africa "Lutheran Youth Research" project, to survey youth problems and needs in order to guide the youth work of the churches that it may speak relevantly to the young people today." (p. 100, No. 2).
 - "b. The Lutheran Churches of Africa are urged to make careful recruitment of youth leaders and the LWF Department of World Mission is requested to assist in the study and development of any possible avenues of training these workers." (p. 100, No. 4).
2. That pastors and members of congregations be made aware of the fact that one of the greatest contributions the local youth groups can make to family life is to provide a place where young Christians can become acquainted.

D. *Women's Work*

1. That one of the basic aims of the women's organizations should be to provide training for Christian motherhood and family nurture.
2. That in such training special attention be paid to those women who are illiterate, and that where feasible literacy training be carried on in conjunction with the women's organizations.

E. *Deaconal Responsibility of the Congregation*

That each congregation be constantly reminded of its deaconal responsibility to help the families in its midst, i.e. the poor, sick, widows, orphans, strangers and refugees to the best of its ability.

F. *Indigenous Forms of Worship*

That whereas worship in the family and in the congregation is much more edifying when the forms of expression come out of the heart and soul of the people every encouragement should be given to the development of hymns and forms of worship which express the deepest feelings of the people in ways meaningful to them. By this we do not mean that there is an "African Gospel" or an "African Christ" but that what is good and of value in our culture should be utilized in our witness to Jesus the Christ, the Son of God, and the Lord of the Church.

Report C: Education for Christian Living and Stewardship

In recognizing the Church's responsibility to provide Christian nurture to her members and to proclaim the Gospel message to the world we see this to be a continuous and continuing educational process going on throughout lifetime from cradle to grave.

Whereas we deem it essential that such a program be well organized and integrated; and

Whereas the teaching ministry of the Church has often been inadequate, especially in the time of rapid social changes, and

Whereas the All-Africa Lutheran Conference recognizes that in fact through their baptismal all baptized Christians, clergy and laity, have been given the responsibility to both grow in the faith themselves and provide Christian nurture to others,

I. Therefore be it

RECOMMENDED to the churches:

1. That they consider it as an urgent need to expand their present training programs for pastors and to include Christian education, in the broadest sense of the word, as an integral part of their training.
2. That they also consider it an urgent need to expand the present training programs for laity so as to make them more aware of their responsibilities in the teaching ministry of the Church.
3. That in order for the churches to accomplish this, theological colleges, Bible schools, spiritual retreats, vacation and refresher courses, women and men's organizations, literacy programs, etc. be used to their utmost.
4. That the churches avail themselves of the existing services and programs of the various LWF commissions and that we encourage exchange programs involving experts in the fields of stewardship, education, parish life, etc., and that we further recommend that assistance, including adequate materials, be given in the conducting of courses of training with experts coming from the African churches, LWF, and other national and international organizations such as the National Christian Councils, the World Council of Christian Education and Sunday Schools, etc.
5. That they establish liaison among themselves for the purpose of exchanging materials and information concerning the Church's ministry through education.
6. That they organize parents' groups within their congregations for the purpose of helping these parents to fulfill their responsibilities in providing spiritual nourishment to their children in their homes.
7. That they compile an integrated religious instruction program to be used by parents in the homes, by teachers in schools, by pastors and congregations in special church activities such as confirmation classes, Sunday schools, youth organizations, men's and women's work, etc.
8. That every effort be made by each one of them to seek ways and means of becoming self-supporting.

9. That each congregation should seek to involve all its members, the laity as well as the clergy, in this continuous program of Christian nourishment from cradle to grave; and this means the full giving of one's total life and talents, and proportionate giving of his income.

II. Be it further

RESOLVED:

That the LWF be requested to explore means and ways of establishing a post-ordination course in theology on a permanent basis at an existing Lutheran theological seminary.

Plenary Paper III:

CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUAL

Walter A. Trobisch*) **)

"Jesus took the man aside, away from the crowd... and said to him, 'Be opened'. With that his ears were opened, and at the same time the impediment was removed..." (Mark 7:33—35).

What we need is a message *tailored for each individual*. In a concrete situation, general principles alone are not enough.

Let us therefore take three persons aside — away from the crowd. Let us try to help them and take responsibility for them as a congregation.

All three of them are real persons. Of course, I have changed their names. They come from three different African countries, thousands of miles apart, but I shall not tell you from which countries. They have given me permission to use their cases as an example, so I am not breaking their confidence.

I would like for you to meet first of all:

JOSEPH

Joseph is a teacher at a mission school. He is about 26 years old. I never met him, but we corresponded for almost three years. He wrote me after he had read my booklet *I Loved a Girl*:¹⁾

"Three years ago I married a 15 year old person. I have ten years of schooling, my wife only six. God blessed us one year ago with a baby. I purposely did not choose a girl with a higher level of education, for I intended to educate my wife in order that she becomes exactly as I wanted her to be in her work and cleanliness, in her whole life.

But she does not satisfy me anymore with her obedience. She does not do what I command her to do. If I insist, we quarrel. I ask you for a solution to save this young marriage."

*) The Rev. Walter A. Trobisch, Missionary to the Cameroun, American Lutheran Church, presently in Germany.

**) For references in this paper see appended List of References, page 107.

Before I tell you how I answered him, I would like to make these reflections:

In order to help Joseph we have to understand his way of thinking. For him, marriage is an alliance with an inferior being. For him, a woman is primarily a garden. Man is then primarily the bearer of the seed of life. That is their destiny. Their destiny decides their function. Their function defines their relationship.

According to this conception the woman can never be as important as the man, anymore than the soil can be as important as the seed. By her very nature, she is secondary, auxiliary. This is the root of all discrimination between man and woman that has shaped the history of mankind, not only in Africa, but also in Asia and, until very recently, also in Europe and America.

This conception of marriage is not only based on a wrong and inaccurate biology, but it is also not in accordance with the New Testament which conceives of husband and wife as equal partners before God.

My task was to change Joseph's image of marriage. Here is my answer:

"Joseph, you have not married a wife. You have married a daughter. You were looking for a maid, obedient to your commandments. She was 15 when you married her. Now she is 18. In these three years she has developed from a girl to a young woman. In addition she has become a mother. This has changed her personality completely. She wants to be treated as a person. She wants to become your partner."

"Furthermore", I wrote to Joseph, "it strikes me that your quarreling started after God gave you a baby. How long is the period of lactation in your tribe? Could it be that your quarreling has a deeper reason? It is not God's will for a married couple to abstain from physical union for such a long time."

Joseph's answer came quickly:

"You are exactly right . . . It is true that we abstain from sex relations for two years after the birth of a child . . . This habit is incorporated in us. Otherwise we are afraid of losing the baby, especially if the mother breastfeeds it and if it is a boy . . . My father-in-law pointed this out to me when our child was born."

Before I continue Joseph's story, again some reflections:

1. The practice of abstaining from sex relations during the period of lactation presupposes a polygamous society. According to the (false) biological conception of marriage, a man can have several gardens to be planted one after the other. A garden can have one proprietor only. Joseph wants to be a Christian. He has been taught by his church that polygamy is sin. But he has been left with this negative message. He has not received any positive advice on how to live with one wife as a partner, nor has he been told how to space his children.

2. It is interesting that he did not confide his problem to his pastor. Evidently he did not expect any help from him. Still Joseph looks for a counsellor. He may find him in a doubtful friend, maybe not a Christian, and he may be advised to do things which are poison for his marriage.

The method our couple uses for spacing their children — complete abstinence — will lead to an estrangement and husband and wife will slowly drift apart.

3. a) Let us imagine that Joseph would have tried to solve his problem by taking a second wife. It is evident that refusing him communion as punishment for this action would have been the most inadequate answer to his problem on how to space his children. *What is needed in Africa are not church disciplinarians, but marriage counsellors.*²⁾
- b) In case Joseph had not gone ahead and simply taken a second wife, but confided his intention to his pastor, explaining his motive, would his pastor have been able to help? Would the pastor have received enough training in this respect at the seminary? When a Christian takes a second wife, it is mostly due to the fact that his congregation has not carried responsibility for him.
- c) It is unkind and merciless if missionaries condemn polygamy as sin, but keep silent to Africans about methods of conception control³⁾ which they themselves use. It is even more so because a missionary usually has powdered milk at his disposal while an African villager does not.
4. Let us imagine another possibility. Maybe Joseph did not take a second wife, but secretly had sex relations with an unknown girl or even the wife of another man. In other words, he had committed adultery. Now, since he wants to be a Christian, his conscience hurts him. What could he have done?
- a) Would he have found someone in your congregation to whom he could have gone, confess his sin and receive the absolution? If he had come to you, whether you are a pastor or not, would you have known what to do?⁴⁾

What is needed in Africa are not excommunicators but confessors, able to keep the secret of confession absolute. What kind of training do our pastors receive in this respect?

Here is the heart of the congregational responsibility for the individual. The offer of private confession is probably the most helpful contribution the Lutheran Church could make to the African churches as a whole. Martin Luther says: "No one knows what private confession can do for him, except he who has struggled much with the devil. Yes the devil would have slain me long ago, if the confession would not have sustained me."⁵⁻⁸⁾

- b) It is also possible that Joseph would not have dared to confess, but maybe you would have heard about his sin. Then it would have been your duty to go to him. Responsibility for the individual means to take

the initiative. Just as God has taken the initiative in Jesus Christ and has spoken to us without our inviting him, so we have to take the initiative and talk to our brother, even if he does not ask us.

This is "church discipline" according to the New Testament. "Go ye therefore..." not to put him out of the church, but to win him back to Jesus Christ (Matt. 18:15; II Thess. 3:15; II Tim. 2:25). *Church discipline means to go and to win, not to wait and to judge.*⁹⁻¹¹)

There is no time to report the case of Joseph in full. The relationship between him and his wife improved after I informed him about other methods of conception control. Later on a new problem arose: The family moved from the village to town. While living in the village Joseph's wife had fed her family from the food which she had grown in her own garden. But in town she did not have a garden. She had to go shopping. Joseph had to give her money, which had rarely happened before.

Here is Joseph's letter:

"Tell me how to make up a family budget and how to convince a woman — however idiotic she may be — to keep it. Most of the time my wife buys things which we don't need and then they spoil."

I made up a detailed monthly budget according to Joseph's income and included as one item: "pocket money for each one of you". Joseph wrote:

"My wife was very happy about it. After we had divided up the money, she was frank enough to tell me also the criticism which she had in her heart about my spending habits. She was overwhelmed by joy to see the item appear: 'pocket money for each one of you'".

This was, after almost three years of corresponding, the first time that Joseph had reported to me a reaction of his wife. The fact that he had shared my letter with her, that he even listened to her reproaches, but above all the fact that he gave her spending money, shows that his marriage had grown from a patriarchal pattern where the husband-father dominates his wife, into a marriage of partnership. A garden cannot rejoice and talk. One cannot listen to a garden. Joseph's wife had changed from a garden to a person. She had become a wife.

Before we leave the case of Joseph, three final reflections:

1. Formerly the course of life was channeled. The individual had to make very few decisions of his own. The road was marked by customs and traditions. This has changed now. The individual has to make up his mind about many things which formerly were decided by the family and the group. But — as the case of Joseph and his wife shows — the individual is not trained to make these decisions. Counselling therefore becomes indispensable. It belongs to the responsibility of the congregation. It is the diaconal service which the Christian church must give in a situation of social change.
- The work of the counsellor can be compared best of all with swim-

ming. The time is past when a counsellor could stand on a solid hilltop and give prefabricated rules and commandments to the counsellee. The counsellor has to descend from the hilltop and go into the water. Counsellor and counsellee have to swim together. With this picture of swimming in mind, the fact of *uncertainty* is expressed which characterizes the beginning of each counselling process. At the outstart the counsellor may be more in need of advice than his counsellee. But he swims together with him, trying to make out beforehand the whirlpools and the rapids, the islands and the riverbanks. For a limited time, while exploring the situation for clarification and solutions, the counsellor becomes the partner of his counsellee. God is in this situation and the counsellor has to find his will together with his counsellee. Only what the latter is able and willing to accept and put into practice will help him.¹¹⁻¹²)

2. The development of Joseph's marriage during the time of our correspondence proves that marriage guidance by letter can be fruitful. It may even be easier to confide the most intimate problems to a complete stranger. Because of the long distances and the lack of trained counsellors, marriage guidance by mail has a great promise in Africa, all the more because a personal letter there is highly treasured. It gives the receiver the experience of "being taken aside, away from the crowd", to have his impediment removed.
3. Marriage guidance is not only a counselling task. It is also a missionary opportunity. Since marriage is part of practical Christian living, the Christian marriage counsellor has the possibility of proclaiming the Gospel to non-Christians along with the advice he gives. Marriage has become *the* problem of life today. People of all confessions, religions, classes and races are interested in it. Every heathen, Muslim or Communist will listen to those who have something useful to say about marriage. As Christians, I believe, we do have something useful to say.
But: Do we say it? Or is the church in possession of a treasure of knowledge and wisdom, but keeping it locked up instead of handing it out?

This is the question we have to ask ourselves when studying the next case. Please meet Miss Elsie:

ELSIE

Elsie is a high school student and the daughter of a "minister of religion" as she calls it. I know her too only by letter. She wrote to me in June 1964 and asked: "How can I meet a Christian boy?" I advised her to attend church. There she could meet boys.

Here is her answer:

"The old people in our churches don't want boys to meet girls, not even to talk to them in their presence. Always the Sunday service

begins by speaking against boys and girls. This has turned away most of the boys and girls from attending church. The other day the pastor said: 'If any boy has written to you a letter, return it to him and tell him never to write to you any letter.' "

I answered, but for a long time I did not hear from Elsie. Later I learned that her school principal had confiscated my letter. I was not on the list of men with whom she was allowed to correspond. So my letter went to her parents, who lived in a small village, hundreds of miles away from her school. It took three months before the permission came and my letter was handed over to Elsie.

Finally she wrote again:

"I have met a boy who is not of my tribe. He is a keen Christian and a student in a secondary school. It appears to me as if he would make a good husband according to the direction in your book *I Loved a Girl*.

I went home and talked to my parents about him. They said they would not allow me to marry from any other tribe apart from mine. They claim that men from my boyfriend's tribe are going about with other women, even if they are married. I have tried to tell them that not all men from that tribe are bad, but they insist on my marrying someone from my own tribe.

Since we are told that we should honor our parents, I cannot do something which is against their will. To make it worse: I do not live at home. I know very few boys from my own tribe. Seeing that this boy is interested in me, should I disregard my parents' advice?"

In my answer I advised Elsie to take her boyfriend home once and present him to her parents, in order that they could meet him as a person. If she is certain about God's will for her marriage, she should obey God more than men.

Elsie's answer, dated January 21, 1965:

"My parents have become impossible. They cannot approve the choice I have made. They say they have heard rumors that the man I have chosen was misbehaving at college. But ever since I met him, he has never showed me any nonsense. I have decided to remain single for the whole of my life, unless I can marry him."

Some reflections about Elsie's problems:

1. Marriage between two Christians must be based on mutual trust and confidence. Confidence demands free choice. Free choice demands opportunities where young people can meet in a healthy atmosphere without suspicion. It belongs to the responsibility of the congregation to provide such opportunities. Many marriage problems in Africa have their root in the fact that the couple never had time and opportunity to really meet and get acquainted before marriage.
2. Many African boys and girls have a list with names of a limited number of persons with whom they correspond. In a society where the meeting

of the sexes is still difficult, also for outward reasons, we have to recognize that letter-writing as a means to establish contacts, can be a good one. Instead of intercepting mail, schools should rather teach criteria of how to evaluate a letter and give helpful instructions for answering.

3. Elsie's case reflects two areas of conflict.

- a) The conflict between the younger and the older generation. Dealing with the parents, uncles and grandparents of the couple involved is probably the thorniest problem of a marriage counsellor in Africa. But it has been overlooked that in a fast-changing society the education of the older generation also belongs to the responsibility of the congregation.

The church may also have to speak out on the rules of exogamy (the tradition forcing a young man to find a bride outside a defined group of relatives) or endogamy (reversely, the rule that a bride can only be found within a close core of relatives).¹³⁾

- b) The conflict between individual freedom and the obligation to tradition and family. Elsie has new possibilities of choice, unknown to her parents. She is caught between making use of this freedom and submission to rules originating from customs not any more relevant to her situation. Again, like Joseph, she is in need of personal counselling in her new freedom.¹⁴⁾

4. Her decision, however, to renounce this freedom and the wish of her heart, even against the advice of her counsellors, poses for us the following questions:

- a) If you had been her counsellor, what would you have advised her to do?
- b) Assuming that God called Elsie to stay single: Would it be possible for her to put this decision into practice? Does our church have a message for single girls? What would be the responsibility of her congregation for her?¹⁵⁾
- c) Is the decision against individual freedom and for submission to tradition *always* God's will? Where are the limitations of the fourth commandment?
- d) What is behind the attitude of her parents? (Her father is a pastor!) How far here is also the "biological" conception of marriage at work? Will they be pleased by her "obedience" or rather be shocked, that their "garden" shall never be planted? What could be done to help her parents to better understand their daughter?

Conclusion

Elsie's case, after all, is an encouraging one. She has character. She proves that the coming generation of African girls is able to make up their minds by themselves, instead of being pushed around and dominated, that they are on their way to mature womanhood.

Africa's future will depend upon this growth. There will be no free

nations, unless there are free couples. There will be no free couples unless the wife grows into true partnership with her husband.

It is the responsibility of the congregation to help towards such growth. It is the solution for Joseph's case as much as for Elsie's and even for our next case.

Please meet Mr. Omodo:

OMODO

On one of my trips I worshipped in an African church where nobody knew me. After the service I talked to two boys who had also attended.

"How many brothers and sisters do you have?" I asked the first one.

"Three."

"Are they all from the same stomach?"

"Yes, my father is a Christian."

"How about you?" I addressed the other boy.

He hesitated. In his mind he was adding up. I knew immediately that he came from a polygamous family.

"We are nine", he finally said.

"Is your father a Christian?"

"No", was the typical answer, "he is a polygamist."

"Are you baptized?"

"Yes, and my brothers and sisters too", he added proudly.

"And their mothers?"

"They are all three baptized, but only the first wife takes communion."¹⁶)

"Take me to your father."

The boy led me to a compound with many individual houses. It breathed an atmosphere of cleanliness, order and wealth. Each wife had her own house and her own kitchen. The father, a middle-aged, good-looking man, tall, fat and impressive, received me without embarrassment and with apparent joy.

I found Omodo, as we shall call him, a well-educated person, wide awake and intelligent, with a sharp wit and a rare sense of humour. From the outset he made no apologies for being a polygamist, he was proud of it.¹⁷)

Let me try to put down here the essential content of our conversation that day, which lasted for several hours.

"Welcome to the hut of a poor sinner!" The words were accompanied by a good-hearted laughter.

"It looks like a rich sinner", I retorted.

"The saints come very seldom to this place", he said, "they don't want to be contaminated with sin."

"But they are not afraid to receive your wives and children. I just met them in church."

"I know. I give everyone a coin for the collection plate. I guess I

finance half of the church's budget. They are glad to take my money, but they don't want me."

I sat in thoughtful silence. After a while he continued:

"I feel sorry for the pastor. By refusing to accept all the polygamous men in town as church members he has made his flock poor and they shall always be dependent upon subsidies from America. He has created a church of women whom he tells every Sunday that polygamy is wrong."¹⁸⁾

"Wasn't your first wife heart-broken when you took a second one?" Omodo looked at me almost with pity.

"It was her happiest day", he said finally.

"Tell me how it happened."

"Well, one day after she had come home from the garden and had fetched wood and water, she was preparing the evening meal, while I sat in front of my house and watched her. Suddenly she turned to me and mocked me. She called me a 'poor man', because I had had only one wife. She pointed to our neighbor's wife who could care for her children while the other wife prepared the food."

"Poor man", Omodo repeated. I can take much, but not that. I had to admit that she was right. She needed help. She had already picked out a second wife for me and they get along fine."

I glanced around the courtyard and saw a beautiful young woman, about 19 or 20, come out of one of the huts.

"It was a sacrifice for me", Omodo commented. "Her father demanded a very high lobola."

"Do you mean that the wife who caused you to become a polygamist is the only one of your family who receives communion?"

"Yes, she told the missionary how hard it was for her to share her love for me with another woman. According to the church my wives are considered sinless because each of them has only one husband. I, the father, am the only sinner in our family. Since the Lord's supper is given to sinners,¹⁹⁾ I am excluded from it. Do you understand that, pastor?"

I was entirely confused.

"And you see", Omodo continued, "they are all praying for me that I might be saved from sin, but they don't, agree from which sin I must be saved."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, the pastor prays that I may not continue to commit the sin of polygamy. My wives pray that I may not commit the sin of divorce. I wonder whose prayers are heard first."

"So your wives are afraid that you become a Christian?"

"They are afraid that I become a church member. Let's put it that way. For me there is a difference^{20, 21)}. You see they can only have intimate relations with me as long as I do not belong to the church. In the moment I would become a church member their marriage relations with me would become sinful."

"Wouldn't you like to become a church member?"

"Pastor, don't lead me into temptation! How can I become a church member, if it means to disobey Christ? Christ forbade divorce, but not polygamy. The church forbids polygamy but demands divorce. How can I become a church member if I want to be a Christian? For me there is only one way: to be a Christian without the church!"

"Have you ever talked to your pastor about that?"

"He does not dare to talk to me, because he knows as well as I do that some of his elders have a second wife secretly. The only difference between them and me is that I am honest and they are hypocrites."

"Did a missionary ever talk to you?"

"Yes, once. I told him that with the high divorce rate in Europe, they have only a successive form of polygamy while we have a simultaneous polygamy. That did it. He never came back."

I was speechless. Omodo accompanied me back to the village. He evidently enjoyed to be seen with a pastor.

"But tell me, why did you take a third wife?" I asked him.

"I did not take her. I inherited her from my late brother, including her children. Actually my older brother would have been next in line. But he is an elder. He is not allowed to sin by giving security to a widow."²²)

I looked in his eyes. "Do you want to become a Christian?"

"I *am* a Christian",²³) Omodo said without smiling.

As I walked slowly down the path, the verse came to my mind:

"You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel" (Matt. 23:24).

What does it mean to take responsibility as a congregation for Omodo?

I am sorry that I was not able to see Omodo again, because I had met him while I was on a trip. I just report to you the essence of our conversation because it contains in a nutshell the main attitudes of polygamists towards the church. It is always healthy to see ourselves with the eyes of an outsider.

I asked myself: What would I have done if I were pastor in Omodo's town? Let me share with you my thoughts and then ask for your criticism. They are based on many experiences in dealing with other polygamist families. Maybe you have better ideas than I have. Please, help me to help Omodo.

The trouble with Omodo is that, unlike Joseph or Elsie, he did not ask for help. But that does not mean that he is not in need of help. The fact that he did almost all the talking and hardly gave me a chance, proves his inner insecurity. His sarcasm showed me that deep down in his heart he was afraid of me.

In order to take this fear away I accepted defeat. You will have noticed that I was a defeated person when I left him. If you want to win someone over, nothing better can happen to you than defeat. In the eyes of the world

the cross of Jesus Christ was a defeat. Yet God saved the world by this defeat. In talking with our fellow men we must remember this truth. We can easily win an argument, but lose a person. Our task is not to defend (no, not even the church), but to witness.

Humble acceptance of defeat is often the most convincing testimony we can give for our humble Lord. It is the one thing which the other one does not expect. Counselling is not preaching at a short distance. It is ninety per cent listening.

When I have a conversation like this I ask myself first of all: Where is the other one right?

I think Omodo is right in his criticism of contradictory church policies, which sometimes deny our own doctrines.^{24, 25}) We have made the church the laughing-stock of a potentially polygamous society. We have often acted according to the statement: "There are three things that last forever: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of them all is church order and discipline."²⁶)

Some churches demand that a polygamous man separates himself from all his wives, some from all but one. Others demand that he keeps the first one; others again allowed him to choose. Some allow that his wives stay with him under the condition that he has no intercourse with them.

Some do not even allow polygamists to enter the catechumen class. Others allow them, but do not baptize them. Again others baptize them, but do not give them communion. A few allow them full church membership, but forbid them to hold office.

The most generous solution was to baptize a polygamist only on his death bed. It happened to a Swedish missionary once that such a polygamist did not die, but recovered after baptism. The church council decided: "Such things must not happen." They did not specify whether they referred to the recovery of the polygamist or to his baptism.^{27, 28})

* Friends, we have made ourselves fools before the world with our policies. Let us admit honestly our helplessness first of all. We are facing a problem here where we just do not know what to do.

Maybe our mistake is that we want to establish a general law for all cases (See reference 18). We want to be like God, knowing what is good and evil, and have decided that monogamy is "good" and polygamy "evil" while the word of God clearly does not say so. The Old Testament has no outspoken commandment against polygamy and the New Testament is conspicuously silent about it. Instead of dealing with *polygamy*, the Bible has a message for *polygamists*.

Therefore let us not deal with an abstract problem. Instead let us meet a concrete person. Let us meet Omodo.²⁹)

What would I have done?

First of all I would have gone back to visit him again. Church discipline, as the New Testament understand it, starts with *me*, not with the other one. If possible, I would have taken my wife along. I would have asked her to tell Omodo what she would think of me if I let her work all day in the garden, get wood and water, care for the children and prepare the food

while I sit idly in the shade all day under the eaves of my hut and watch her work.

I think she would have told him that he does not have three wives, but actually he has no wife at all. He is married to three female slaves. Consequently he is not a real husband, but just a married male. Only a real husband makes a wife a real wife.³⁰)

In the meantime I would have talked to Omodo's first wife and told her precisely the same: Only a real wife makes a husband a real husband. I would have challenged her because she had not demanded enough from her husband. She had behaved like an overburdened slave trying to solve her problem by getting a second slave. Instead she should have asked her husband to help her. She should have behaved like a partner and expected partnership.³¹)

She probably would have thought I was joking and not have understood at all. So I would have explained and we would have talked, visit after visit, week after week. Then finally I would have asked her why she ridiculed her husband. I am sure there was something deeper behind it, a concrete humiliation for which she took revenge, a hidden hatred.

At the same time I would have continued to talk to Omodo not telling him anything which I had learned from his wife, but listening to his side of the story. I am sure I would have heard precisely the opposite of what his wife had said. I would have tried to make him understand his wife and to make his wife understand her husband. Then, maybe after months, I would have started to see them both together at the same time, possibly again accompanied by my wife.

(The best way to teach marriage of partnership is by example. One day we were discussing it in our "marriage class", a one-year course I taught at Cameroun Christian College. The students were telling me that African women are just not yet mature enough to be treated as equal partners. While we were discussing this, rain was pouring down. We watched through the window of the classroom the wife of the headmaster of our primary schools, who jumped from her bicycle and sought refuge under the roof of the school building. After a little while a car drove up. Out stepped her husband, handed her the keys, and off she drove with the car, while he followed her on the bicycle getting soaked in the rain. This settled the argument. It is up to the husband to make his wife a partner).

Then one day I would have attacked the case of the second wife. I can imagine her story. She probably was given into marriage with Omodo for a high lobola at a very young age. I would have tried to find out how she felt about her situation. Young and attractive as she was, I cannot imagine that she was so terribly excited by old fat Omodo. It is very likely that she had a young lover alongside. According to my experience, I have found that women in polygamous marriages often live in adultery, because their husbands, staying usually with one wife for a week at a time, are not able to satisfy them.

Solving the problem of the second wife would involve talks with her father and "fathers" and also with the young man she really loves. It would have been a hard battle, but I do not think a hopeless one. It is a question

of faith; I would trust Jesus that he can do a miracle. I would ask some Christians in the congregation who understand the power of prayer, to pray when I talk to the father. Every father wants to have a happy daughter. I would try to convince him to pay the lobola back to Omodo or at least a part of it.

The first time I would have suggested to Omodo to let his second wife go, he probably would have thrown me out the front door. So I would have entered again through the back door. I would have tried him out by an unceasing barrage of love.

It is very important that by now a very deep personal contact and friendship is established between Omodo and me, a "partnership in swimming". In this partnership Jesus Christ becomes a reality between us even though his name is not mentioned in every conversation.

One day, I think, he would have admitted that he did not take his second wife just out of unselfish love for his first one, but that he considered his first wife as dark bread when he had appetite for a piece of candy.

Now we could start to talk meaningfully about sin. Not about the sinfulness of polygamy, but about concrete sins *in* his polygamous state.³²) So I would have talked to Omodo about his selfishness, to his first wife about her hatred, lies and hypocrisy, to the second one about her adultery. In the the minute they began to see how these things separated them from God, it would not have been difficult to make them aware of their need of forgiveness. Then we could have talked about reconciliation with God. This reconciliation would have happened through the absolution. "He has enlisted us in this service of reconciliation" (II Cor. 5:18).³³)

After the experience of the absolution we would have tried *together* to find the will of God for each person involved.

Would the separation of Omodo from his second wife be a divorce? It depends upon whether we consider polygamy also as a form of marriage.³⁴) I believe we have to. Let us be fair. It is not "permanent adultery" as a missionary once told me. Adultery is never permanent. It is a momentary relationship in secrecy with no responsibility involved. Polygamy is a public state, based on a legally valid contract, involving life-long responsibility and obligations. If polygamy is marriage, separation is divorce.

Our dilemma is that we want monogamy and we do not want divorce. Yet we cannot have one without the other.^{35, 36})

There are situations in life where we have the choice between two sins and where the next step can only be taken in counting on the forgiveness of our crucified Savior. It is in such situations where Luther gave the advice in all evangelical freedom: "Sin bravely!" — being guided by the love to your neighbor and by what is most helpful to him.

For me there is no doubt that in Omodo's case the most helpful solution for his second wife would be to marry the man she loves.

The case of Omodo's third wife, whom he had inherited from his late brother, is probably the most difficult one. In Omodo's case it was especially difficult, because she was blind. I would have gathered the elders of the

church and explored possibilities on how to support her through congregational help in case she wanted to live independently.^{37, 38)}

The way a congregation treats their widows is the most outstanding test of their willingness and ability to carry responsibility for the individual.

One question is still open and I know you are waiting for the answer. When would I have baptized Omodo?

I do not know. One cannot answer this question theoretically. I hope you understand that what I just described is not the work of an afternoon, but of months, maybe years. Under the condition that this work is done, the moment chosen for baptism is not of decisive importance. There are no chronological laws in the process of salvation.

I would not have baptized Omodo before he had an experience of private confession and absolution.³⁹⁾ But then, some place along the way, I would have done it, asking God for guidance together with the congregation for the right moment.⁴⁰⁾

We should get away from considering church discipline as a matter of sin and righteousness, but rather put it on the basis of faith and unbelief.⁴¹⁾

Faith is not a nothing and the use of sacraments is not a nothing. In case it would have taken years to find a solution for Omodo's wives, I would have expected such a solution as fruit of his baptism and not as a condition for it.

In the meantime, while working and praying for a solution, Omodo would have to "sin bravely", sensing his polygamous state more and more as a burden. As his brother in Christ, together with the congregation, I could only act then according to Gal. 6:2: "Bear one another's burden and fulfill the law of Christ."⁴²⁾

Would then the walls break and the church be flooded by polygamy? I do not believe so.⁴³⁾

I think we overestimate ourselves, if we always think we have to keep up the walls, otherwise they will break.⁴⁴⁾ The church has been so busy just being church, that it has lost sight of the individual and his need.

The statement "God is a God of order" is not to be found in the Bible. 1 Cor. 14:33 reads: "God is not a God of disorder, but of — peace".

To help the individual in the name of the God of peace we need both the rules and the exceptions.^{45, 46)} Laws are broken by the situations we face today. The time of timeless principles is past in our rapidly changing society. The counsellor has to give himself into life with its many different situations and happenings and "swim" with his counsellee. *God is with them in the water.*

Counselling the individual is putting congregational responsibility into practice. In the process of counselling, the unacceptable one is taken aside, away from the crowd, and unconditionally accepted. Therefore in counselling the justification of the sinner becomes a reality.

List of References

- 1) U.S.C.L. Lutterworth Press, London E.C.4.
- 2) It is not the purpose of this paper to teach methods of conception control or to explain why certain methods lead to an estrangement. The purpose of this paper is only to point out that such teaching belongs to the congregational responsibility for the individual.
- 3) The expression "birth control" is misleading. It conceives of birth as the beginning of life. As a result abortions can be justified as a means of birth control. We prefer therefore the expression "conception control", because it recognizes the fecundation of the ovum through the semen as the beginning of life. Every destruction of this new life is murder.
- 4) Bonhoeffer, "Life Together", New York, 1954, p. 110.
The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are inthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy.
- 5) Luther, Sermons in Lent, 1522, Eighth sermon, Weimar Ed. 10,III,61.
- 6) Statement on Absolution, TALC, Pastor's Bulletin, May 1958.
A step in the right direction would be to look upon absolution in the simple, easy, natural way that Luther does — not simply as a rite that is administered by the pastor in connection with a formal service, but as a simple word of assurance which a Christian brother may give to another on the basis of the promises of Scripture.
Luther never tires of emphasizing that every Christian brother may pronounce forgiveness with full authority and perfect validity. He repeats this with extraordinary frequency, even in his latest works.
- 7) Bonhoeffer, "Life Together".
Christ made the Church, and in it our brother, a blessing to us. Now our brother stands in Christ's stead. Before him I need no longer to dissemble. Before him alone in the world I dare to be the sinner that I am, here the truth of Jesus Christ and his mercy rules. Christ became our Brother in order to help us. Through Him our brother has become Christ for us in the power and authority of the commissiön Christ has given to him. Our brother stands before us as a sign of the truth and the grace of God. He has been given to us to help us. He hears the confession of our sins in Christ's stead and he forgives our sins in Christ's name. He keeps the secret of our confession as God keeps it. When I go to my brother to confess, I am going to God.
- 8) Antsirabé Report 1960, p. 95.
If an individual falls into sin and is under conviction, there should be opportunity for him to confess his sin privately and receive assurance of forgiveness and aid in overcoming temptation. If his sin is known to members of the congregation they should admonish him in love so that he may repent and be retained in the fellowship of the congregation.
- 9) Antsirabé Report 1960, p. 95.
It is recognized that the Word of God, which is sharper than a two-edged sword, is the normal spiritual instrument for discipline for the Christian and is exercised each time the Word is proclaimed and read.
- 10) Report of All-Africa Seminar on the Christian Home and Family Life. Mindolo, 1963, p. 44.
But at no place in the New Testament is exclusion from the Holy Communion mentioned as a means of discipline. In I Cor. 11:17—28 St. Paul writes, "But let a man prove himself", or "examine himself". He does not say that the communicant member should be examined by somebody else. He is warned

against eating the bread, and drinking the cup of the Lord, unworthily, but the word "unworthily" in this context means partaking of the Holy Communion without appreciating what it implies: it is aimed at the person whose allegiance to Christ is divided, (verses 18, 21), who does not "discern the Lord's body" (verse 29).

- 11) John V. Taylor, *Essays in Anglican Self-Criticism*, p. 156:
Jesus did not die for "a principle", but if we have to define what it was they killed him for, it would not be far wrong to say that it was because "he receiveth sinners and eateth with them". In view of that, our administration of His sacraments must be on the basis, not of the demands of God, but of His forgiveness. There are standards to which the Church must witness — standards of truth as well as conduct; there are sins and errors which she must condemn. But it may well be that she should find some other weapon with which to fight for purity or for truth, in order that her welcome to the sacraments of grace may be as unconditional and as patient as her Lord's.
- 12) Hermannsburg Paper, LWF.
As the old tribal legislation has been destroyed it cannot be compensated by new regulations. The only way out of this disaster is the building up of a strong ethical thinking of the youth of the church.
- 13) Once a young African wrote me that he had 11,000 girls ("sister") in his tribe which he could not marry. Unfortunately he fell in love with one of them.
- 14) ELCSR Study Paper for Addis Ababa, 1965:
10. There are many and different reasons why there are so many girls with illegitimate children nowadays. We believe that youth of today faces a special dilemma. In many respects the young people belong to the old cultural situation, but the change of time and the development of Christianity prevent them from being rooted in the old culture. Nor are they rooted in the new life. They seem to be somewhere between, where they are trying to make impossible compromises. Therefore they very often find themselves lost and handled in a most irresponsible way. Young people are exposed to great temptations and even intimidation. The more should the Church feel responsible for the boys and girls it receives for Baptism and should bring up as the children of God.
- 15) ELCSR Study Paper for Addis Ababa, 1965:
 7. a. In the community it is difficult for unmarried women and widows as they lack the normal security of a family life and may very often be disregarded.
 - b. In the congregation they are respected if their private life is in accordance with Christian ethics.
 - c. They face the personal problems of loneliness, temptation and in many cases poverty and misery.
 - d. The widow cannot remarry without abandoning her children and the Church has so far no possibility to do anything in this matter. (Why?)
 - e) The Christian congregation does not regard it ethically wrong for the mother to abandon her children, provided they are left in good hands and are cared for both bodily and spiritually.
- 16) Mindolo Report, 1963, p. 45:
It is therefore suggested that the Church should baptize polygamists and their wives if they truly repent, and have an eager desire to know God and to live the Christian way. At the same time they should be clearly taught that the will of God as revealed to us in Christ is the monogamous marriage; it is by the grace of God that they have been accepted. And since a separation between the Sacraments is against the nature of the Sacraments, the polygamist and his wives, when baptized, should be allowed to partake of the Holy Communion, but as we have suggested elsewhere, they might well be forbidden office in the Church.
- 17) William Reyburn, Lecture in Douala, September 12, 1958:
Children, crops, gardens and wives are all aspects of the traditional African's

compulsion for a visible sign to mark what he believes. They are the tangible living presentation which guarantee for him the meaning of life. Life is an aspect of power. All that polygamy ideally produces are vivid signs of the presence of this power. Its core is the deep-seated emotion which silently lies hidden in the heart, beckoning and calling, the desire for power.

The step which is badly needed in the communication of the Gospel to the African is that the presence of this power is realized in the submission to the role of the humble servant to be filled with a power for service to others.

We need to communicate a Gospel which speaks to the roots of his real need and show him that Christ is the ultimate answer to the power problem.

18) Ibid:

To preach against polygamy is going at the matter backwards. Legislating against it by church councils while at the same time encouraging the local build-up of the churches creates a contradiction. The Church in Cameroun feels the dilemma in that money is so terribly necessary for the on-going of the Church, but those who can often contribute most (the polygamous men) are excluded from its membership. It is as though General Motors Company were told to increase its total output of automobiles, but also to send its employees on vacation.

19) Ibid:

As it is presently, the father is forced to be an outsider. The source of authority is excluded. The family takes on a feeling of separation from the one they really honor, the father.

20) Jean Kotto, Nairobi, 1963:

Cette année nous avons lancé une campagne d'évangélisation de grande envergure dans l'une des tribus les plus peuplées de notre pays. Les inscriptions au catéchuménat se chiffrent par milliers. On aurait eu plus d'inscriptions si on ne refusaient plus les païens polygames. Le malheur est qu'ils se savent rejetés et condamnés alors qu'ils n'ont pas refusé Jésus Christ comme Sauveur et Seigneur... Dans l'Ancien Testament Dieu a d'abord pris les hommes tels qu'ils étaient dans leur situation concrète et a fait d'eux ses fidèles et ses instruments qu'il a aiguisés petit à petit pour en faire ses témoins.

21) Reyburn, Lecture at Douala, September 12, 1958:

Christian mission Churches are over-concerned with the idea of membership. A first step in a solution would be to reconsider the idea of church members and to embrace a fellowship of families without consideration for the status of marriage union.

22) Hermannsburg Paper, LWF.

By payment of lobola, the wife becomes a member of her husband's clan. Therefore if the husband dies, the widow is normally allocated to one of his brothers without a new marriage ceremony. In other cases, re-marriage to another clan is possible after payment of a reduced lobola, but her children will remain in the clan of their deceased father.

(Here the "biological" conception is also at work.)

23) See reference 20.

24) Norman A. Horner, International Review of Missions, p. 174:

The thinking of the West African Mission of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. has run a fairly typical course. In the beginning it was presumed that women entered polygynous marriage before they knew anything about Christianity. A more or less arbitrary date was therefore set before which a woman could have been married in polygyny and still be eligible for church membership. It became necessary to go through the ridiculous procedure of proving that such women were married before "the great sickness" (the flu epidemic of 1917) in order to admit them to baptism. There was therefore the arbitrary situation of admitting a woman who had married in 1916 and of refusing another who had been married in 1918.

- 25) ELCSR Study Paper for Addis Ababa, 1965.
Remark: Where Baptism at the death bed has been practised, we completely disagree with such a practice as it does not agree with the Biblical conception and teaching of Baptism.
- 26) G. Hartman, Superintendent of the Moravian Mission, East Griqualand, Cape Province, Quoted by Hellander, *Must we Introduce Monogamy?* Pietermaritzburg, 1958, p. 69:
But I feel that by our narrow approach of the problem influenced by European theories, a tremendous harm is done to the African people. I myself shall never ask a man to dismiss his wives. It is cruel, immoral and has nothing to do with Christ at all. Nothing but stubborn theories, doctrines as hard as a stone without understanding of the problem and without love. I have done it once in my life and never again.
- 27) Reported in Hellander, *Must we introduce Monogamy?*, p. 20.
- 28) See reference 25.
- 29) Is he a special case? Every one of us is a "special case". There are no two persons exactly alike. Still, if we can help in one case we might find the key to deal with many others.
- 30) Reyburn, September 12, 1958:
Polygamy dies out where the status of women is raised and where the woman becomes highly conscious of her own personality and aware of marriage as a sharing, reciprocal relation, rather than a servant relationship.
- 31) Thielicke, *Ethik III* 2041—2055:
Das Motiv zur Monogamie liegt wesentlich in der weiblichen Geschlechtsnatur beschlossen. Sie liegt im Zuge ihrer Selbstwerdung, ihrer "Herausformung". Da die Frau ohne Schädigung ihrer Wesenssubstanz nicht polygam zu leben vermag, kann es auch nicht der Mann.
(Free translation) The motive for monogamy is essentially based on a woman's sexual nature. Only in monogamy can she truly become herself. She cannot live in polygamy without doing damage to her own nature. For this reason man too cannot live in polygamy without doing damage to his nature.
- 32) To talk to a polygamist about the sinfulness of polygamy is of as little help as talking to a soldier about the sinfulness of war or to a slave about the sinfulness of slavery. Paul sent the slave Onesimus back to his slave master, while he proclaimed a message incompatible with slavery and which finally caused its downfall. He broke the institution of slavery from inside, not from outside. This is a law in God's kingdom which can be called the "law of gradual infiltration". It took centuries until slavery was outlawed. God is very patient. Why are we so impatient? (see ref. 20).
- 33) See ref. 7.
- 34) If we compare marriage with a living organism, husband and wife can be compared with the two essential organs, the head and the heart. In all higher-developed organisms one head corresponds to one heart. Only primitive organisms are just a plurality of cells as for example the *Alga volvox globator*. Parts are relatively independent from the whole. A tapeworm can be cut apart and the parts are still able to live. One could compare polygamy with a primitive organism, which has not yet reached the state in which one head corresponds to one heart. Still a tapeworm is an organism as much as polygamy is marriage.
- 35) "Polygamy, Christian Marriage, and Church Discipline" Joint Report from the Theological Study Commissions in Southern Africa, p. 11.
The question of separation gets many different answers. Hermannsburg: "The separation of a polygamist from his wives is not a separation of a marriage, which is prohibited in the NT, and therefore it is not an unethical act."
Ondini Shixane: "This question cannot be answered by a clear Yes or No. It is really a choice between two evils."

- 36) Ev. Lutheran Church of Southern Rhodesia, Study Paper for Addis Ababa, 1965:
 5. In connection with our point 4., we therefore do not regard such a divorce — separation — as an unethical act since he/she married against the will of God. But where he/she entered into polygamous marriage in complete ignorance of the will of God, we must recognize such a marriage. He/she will be accepted for baptism without the separation that here would be an unethical act. In these cases there should be no general rules or Church regulations, but each case carefully investigated and examined with the help of the Holy Spirit and a good conscience at the Pastors' meeting.
- 37) See ref. 22.
- 38) See ref. 15.
- 39) See ref. 16.
- 40) Antsirabé Report 1960, p. 177.
 The following are recommendations to the Conference:
 1. That we affirm that monogamy is God's plan for marriage, that it is the teaching of the New Testament, that it is the ideal relationship for the expression of love between a man and a woman, and is the proper atmosphere within which to develop a Christian family. The entering into a polygamous marriage by a Christian, whether through the normal channels of giving a dowry or through inheritance, or gift, is an offense against the laws of the Church.
 2. That it is the responsibility of each church, being guided by the Word of God through the Holy Spirit, and being cognizant of the particular time, circumstances, and conditions in which it finds itself, to seek that way which on the one hand will not weaken her standards of faith and practice in the eyes of the world, and on the other hand, will not arbitrarily place upon some who desire its blessings, a burden, the consequences of which may be in opposition to the very message of the Gospel.
- 41) Antsirabé Report 1960, p. 176.
 B. Where evidence of true faith is shown and upon approval of the District Church Council, parties to an established polygamous marriage may be baptized and confirmed. We affirm, however, that in accordance with St. Paul's teaching (I Tim. 3:2, 12) no such person, man or woman, shall be permitted to hold office in the church or congregation or be engaged as a Christian worker. Furthermore, no such baptized person shall enter into further polygamous marriage.
- 42) Pasteur Jean Kotto, Président de CEBEC, Douala, Conférence donnée Janvier, 1963, Nairobi:
 Pour faire un champ dans notre forêt équatoriale où il y a des arbres de toute essence et de toute dimension, le cultivateur commence par couper les lianes et abattre les petits arbres qu'il brûle ensuite au pied des gros arbres (pas encore coupés) pour dégager le terrain et avoir de la place pour cultiver. Il ensemeance ensuite son champ sous ces grands arbres isolés et éparpillés et attend la récolte. Après la récolte il attend l'année suivante et nettoye son champ, ramasse les herbes coupées et les morceaux mal brûlés qu'il dépose au pied des grands arbres pour faire à nouveau du feu. Après plusieurs années et plusieurs récoltes ces grands arbres tombent. S'il avait voulu commencer par abattre ces grands arbres, il se serait peut être découragé et n'aurait pas eu ce champ du tout! Comment allons nous évangéliser l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui...? Il faut commencer par évangéliser notre discipline !!!
- 43) Polygamy is on the retreat anyway for economic reasons. The young generation of Africans long for a monogamous marriage of partnership.
- 44) There is an inherent tendency in every society towards order. Russia, which abandoned marriage laws in 1917, has now introduced the strictest rules in the world — on an atheistic basis.
- 45) All churches in Europe forbid remarriage of divorcees. Yet all of them allow exceptions. Why should the African churches not have the same freedom in dealing with polygamy?
- 46) See ref. 36.

Section Paper III:1

WORD AND SACRAMENT IN CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Paulus Mhlungu*

Church discipline does not exist besides the means of grace, "word and sacraments", for it was originally intended for instruction; but experience has proved that many mistakes are made in applying church discipline. Is it not the experience of pastors that one might rightly divide the Law and Gospel in sermons, but slip off in the exercise of church discipline?

The Purpose of Church Discipline

The purpose of church discipline has been very much misunderstood in some of our churches in South Africa. On the hand misunderstood because it was from the very beginning wrongly introduced by our pioneer missionaries, who taught what was not practised at home; on the other hand misused by churches in Africa because of their misconception of sin. In the traditional African religion there were always bigger and smaller sins. Killing and adultery have always been regarded as grave sins; while telling a lie or swearing were minor sins that really did not matter so much.

In other words, to classify sins may be said to belong to human nature. While the fifth and sixth commandments are alike observed as grave sins by heathen communities, if one may so put it, the striking factor is that amongst Christians and in their applying of church discipline this tendency has been narrowed into only one great grave sin — adultery, or breaking the sixth commandment. To illustrate our grave situation, it would seem that our church discipline is onesided on the treatment of the sixth commandment. It is mostly the female members of our congregations that are victims of our application of church discipline, and the difference between them and the male members is obvious. They have not come to the age of contraceptives. How does our church discipline in this case divide the word into Law and Gospel?

General or Public Confession?

Public confession is the general practice in most of our churches. This

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practice has in turn given the meaning or interpretation of church discipline as being punishment instead of instruction. Thus the following words are of familiar usage in many denominations: "Usikiwe — Unqunyiwe — Umisiwe" — all meaning "he has been cut off" — excommunication from Holy Communion.

The matter of a congregational member is either reported or detected. In each case the congregational council decides that a certain person be excommunicated from Holy Communion. He or she is publicly announced as such in the church service. Thereafter the church elders must see to it that he or she sits on a bench set aside for penitents during church service. As a result most of these people stay away from services until after some time, when they must come to services as a proof of their repentance, or in the case of young women when the baby is big enough for baptism.

The case of a penitent member is now taken for the second time to the congregational council, when the council must judge the earnestness of the penitent's repentance. Thereafter the absolution is done publicly before the congregation and the child is baptized in the case of girls. The congregation does not usually follow up the boy or the father of the child, in case they both belong to the same church.

This form of church discipline has always been carried out in spite of continued frictions amongst educated communities. Pastors have been taken to task for these practices of public announcements, especially after court cases. The benches usually set aside for penitents are gradually being abandoned because of shame, resentment and frustration.

It would seem that the purpose of church discipline of individual soul care by the congregation is lost sight of in the practice and implementation of public confession and absolution. More souls are lost in this way instead of being won for Christ. Who then is to blame, congregation or pastors? Is it not usually so that the sheep follow their shepherd, and the pupils their teacher? Is it strange that the younger churches tend to be legalistic and the older churches prone to an exaggerated form of grace? Maybe the Lutheran church in Africa will need to revise its teaching of rightly dividing the word into Law and Gospel.

Can a Polygamist be Baptized?

There were two polygamists in a congregation. Mkize was married to three wives, and Gwala to two wives. All the five women had gradually been baptized with some of their children, and were all members of one congregation in the Lutheran church. Both Mkize and Gwala were active church goers but unbaptized. The pastor had accepted them in his baptismal class although he had from the very beginning made it clear to them that according to the church laws they could not be baptized until they had divorced their other wives or at their death bed.

Mkize and Gwala continued to attend one class after another with the aim to be baptized. Finally the pastor brought the matter to the congregational council, which strongly recommended that their request be referred to the parish council and from the parish council to the synodal council for

final approval or disapproval. At this time Mkize was in his late seventies and Gwala was fairly young. The synodal council accepted Mkize's request for baptism on the grounds that he was now too old to take a fourth wife. Gwala's request was refused as he was still young enough to marry many other wives, and as he did not see the point in divorcing his second wife. This happened in 1947. Mkize is now dead, and Gwala is not only living but is still the most active unbaptized member of this congregation with only his two wives.

When Mkize was admitted to baptism, he was also automatically admitted to Holy Communion. In the case of these two polygamists it would seem that what would have been sinful would have been for Mkize to marry more wives after he had been baptized, so also with Gwala. If that is the case, why hesitate then in baptizing all polygamists including Gwala because a Christian is not a slave nor a prisoner of the law?

Seminar on Baptism of Polygamists at Luther Seminary, USA

A seminar was held at Luther Seminary by a group of foreign students and some senior American students on the baptism of polygamists, under a professor of missions.

All the foreign students had to give their views as well as the teaching of their respective churches on the question of whether the polygamists should be baptized or not. The foreign students came from the following mission fields: China, Japan, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Madagascar, Tanganyika, Ethiopia. In this most interesting debate it soon became apparent that most of the members amongst foreign students had been brought up in congregations as that of Mkize and Gwala. They had known no better form of church discipline.

The polygamist had no way but to renounce all his wives but one, before he could be baptized. When the question was asked: "How can a man escape the grave sin of forsaking his wife and children?", some of the members hinted on the impossibility of the man (polygamist) continuing to maintain his family except conjugal rites. What about such a hypocrisy practised by a congregation in the name of Christ? No man can renounce his family without sin, nor is it possible for any man to continue to take care of wives and children with imposed artificial domestic limitations.

According to South African Bantu law, marriage by customary union is legal marriage. Polygamy has always been traditional African marriage according to the laws that pertained then. No congregation then can dare call it no marriage, or adultery.

When the polygamist married his wives he did not abridge any laws, neither those of the tribe nor the state. He was a heathen and therefore totally ignorant and exempt from any set of laws observed by the Church. How then does church discipline apply to the polygamist? Polygamy is undoubtedly sin as revealed in the Word. There is therefore no question about the sin of polygamy for any Christian man marrying other wives in addition to his lawful wife. It is the duty of every congregation to make this very clear to all its members.

In this connection, the congregation should above all be able to answer this question on behalf of its members: "Which then is the sin of this man we found settled with his five wives and children, when we, as congregation followed the great commission to preach to him, not only to preach to him, but also baptize him?" How do we divide the word into Law and Gospel in our application of church discipline? "Sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, *but sin is not counted where there is no law*" (Rom. 5:13). "What then shall we say? That we have known sin? By no means! Yet, if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin. I should not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said: 'You shall not covet.' But sin finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. *Apart from the law sin lies dead*" (Rom. 7:7—8). For how long will the Church presume against the word that the heathen polygamist lives in the sin of adultery, and thereby forcing them, now openly, against the fifth and sixth commandments?

Private Confession and Pastoral Counselling

The congregation's individual care of its members through correct interpretation of church discipline should be sought and practised in private confession and pastoral counselling.

Private confession in our African congregations has been hampered by the practice of general absolution. Congregational members have not been encouraged to go to the pastor or to another church member for private confession. Because the pastors have not been grounded in the practice of private confession, the tendency has been unfortunately a failure to keep secret the least confession that one ever receives. Under the present system of church discipline the pastor finds himself bound in many cases to share some of the confessions made to him with his church elders. Could the change over be readily understood by the church elders or could the change over ever be the solution to our practice of church discipline? How much effective is our pastoral counselling?

How and How Soon Could a Change in the Attitude of Church Discipline be Implemented?

Individual care of congregational members goes hand in hand with individual thinking or individualism. The pioneers of mission in Africa came from countries already imbued with the spirit of individualism or sense of freedom; why and how is it they introduced a group system, a legalistic tendency? Was it because they found African people nearer the law, because strict discipline was still prevalent in the home, clan and tribe; and therefore they introduced the same in church and school? Just as our members have been taught and drilled into this form of collective church discipline, through councils and public services, they will, in like manner, be introduced to private confession and absolution, through pastoral counselling. It will mean a direct change in our attitude of teaching the word and sacraments, in what the universal Church means by church discipline for all peoples and for all times.

Section Paper III:2

SEXUAL ETHICS, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND POLYGAMY

Priscilla Mdiniso*)

First of all I would like to make a remark about the case of Elsie.**) A marriage of love has to be based on free choice. I am a Swazi. Among the Swazis it would be acceptable to marry a boy from another tribe. We have a saying: "The most admirable stick is the one derived from a distant land." Therefore I cannot understand Elsie's father. In my tribe an intertribal marriage was considered a good way of building up friendship and better understanding among different tribes.

Secondly I want to make a few remarks about polygamy. Polygamy is only possible if the husband does not consider his wife as an equal. This is demonstrated in polygamous homes where the wives provide cheap labor for their husband. I have a feeling that even in our Christian homes which are monogamous, and even in the homes of pastors the Christian husbands do not always accept their wife as an equal.

It is true according to my observations that the period of sexual abstinence during lactation is one of the causes of polygamy. The man has a possibility to have sex relations with another wife, even though he may not love her. It should be taught to our couples that there are no physical upsets if intercourse is practised while the wife is breastfeeding her baby.

In Southern Africa polygamy is on the retreat mainly for economic reasons. On the other hand cases of adultery among Christians become more frequent. Most men believe that if they abstain from sex relations for a longer period they become unwell.

Thirdly some remarks about the problem of divorce. When missionaries introduced Christianity to Africa they used a legalistic approach. They taught do's and don'ts. Often they were only concerned about people becoming Christians at the expense of their customs and traditions. Even if a polygamist had already children from his wives he was forced to divorce them. I do not believe that this is right. I feel that the Church should provide a way to become members for those men who honestly took life-long responsibility for their wives.

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**) Reference Rev. Trobisch paper, part II.

If we deal with polygamy by laws we create hypocrisy. Some Christian married men divorce their wives one after the other thus practising successive polygamy. Sometimes it even happens that such a divorced man finds faults again with a new wife and has secret sex relations with the former one.

On the other hand the divorced women are in the danger of becoming prostitutes, thus disturbing other happy marriages. The children of the divorced wife do not get any mother love and good care and eventually become delinquents. (Among Africans the children remain with the father in most cases.)

Fourthly I like to make some suggestions.

Instead of teaching does and don'ts, I would suggest that the teachings of the Church be based on an advisory principle. I would like to make the following propositions:

- a. Young people should be enabled to make their own choice as far as life partnership is concerned. The Church should train capable counselors for guiding young people; such guidance is especially necessary in cases of mixed marriages, be it intertribal, interdenominational, interracial or interreligious.
- b. The men in Africa should be educated to consider women as important and responsible for the upbringing of a Christian family. They should be taught how to make joint decisions together with their wives in order to keep the home in good harmony.
- c. As Christians we believe that a man must love and keep one wife. In order to help men to live in a monogamous marriage without committing adultery the Church should teach methods of conception control.
- d. I feel that every case of polygamy should be judged on its own merits, and our principles should be made more flexible to accommodate African customary law.
- e. As in other countries of the world marriage counselling becomes a necessity in Africa too and belongs to the responsibility of the Christian Church.

Section Paper III:3

PERSONAL FREEDOM AND CHRISTIAN OBLIGATION

Andriamanantenaso*

If there is one word people have become fond of using in Asia, Africa, and Latin America today, it is *freedom*. So widely is this word employed, that the result is a sort of intellectual intoxication which endows it with a content that differs greatly from its true meaning.

As a matter of fact, the dictionary defines freedom as "the ability to act or not to act." However, most people wish to recognize only the first part of this definition, and think that freedom is understood as a licence to the possibility of doing anything. This false idea of freedom creates numerous difficulties in society, in family circles, and even in churches.

There is a refusal to understand that true freedom places its own limits upon the rights it ensures. Such limits are expressed by the negative "you shall not . . ." (which implies "If what you do will harm others"). Thus, to be free in this world means to be able to act, up to a certain point. Once this point is reached, one must be capable of stopping. We have seen that for many people it is neither easy nor pleasurable to come to a halt.

What Does This Mean for the Christian?

The Christian is by definition a good citizen, and as such he enjoys all the rights and prerogatives of his citizenship, and carries out all the duties it involves. Must his conception of freedom therefore be the same as that held by the ordinary citizen? Let us see what the Bible says: Galatians 5:13—14: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'" Thus, the Christian's freedom, instead of being hemmed in by a negative injunction, (you shall not), goes beyond the world's freedom in response to a positive commandment: "Be servants." When the Christian puts his freedom into practice, he must therefore do more and go farther than other men. While the citizen must merely refrain from harming others, the Christian must seek to serve them.

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This special content which the Christian has to put into the word "freedom" brings forth problems for which he must seek a solution within the framework of Holy Scripture, the very foundation of his faith. In everyday life, he often finds himself in situations of such a critical nature that, left to his own resources, he can see no way out. The Church must then remember that "... the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the afflicted" (Isaiah 61:1).

Having spoken in general terms, let us now look at a few specific cases.

Disinterment is a deeply rooted Malagasy custom. Quite apart from the considerable expense involved, this ceremony includes practices that are incompatible with the Christian religion. Rabe decided to abandon the custom; but when he made known his decision, he encountered the reprobation of every member of his family. Their attitude not only took shape in words (he was called a renegade, and was cursed, etc.), but it was also expressed by action (he was cut off from any relationship with the family, and even with the tribe). Rabe is most perplexed, for if he holds to his decision he will scandalize everyone; but if he gives in to his relatives, his own Christian conscience will be uneasy.

What counsel will the Church give him?

Rakoto has been happy in the ministry, for which he had felt a special calling ever since his youth. Shortly before a parliamentary election, a delegation from the people sought him out, to ask that he put up his name as a candidate. In order to persuade him to accept, they told him that the other man who would run if he refused was neither morally nor intellectually fitted to be a good representative for the country. Upon consulting his wife and other members of his family, he found that they were in favor of his running, and that they were calculating in advance the many advantages which the new job would offer, and making comparisons which we can well imagine. Rakoto realizes what disappointment and bitterness would result from a refusal on his part. He knows that people will find him to blame each time something does not go as it should in the affairs of the country, or even within his own household.

What will the Church have to say about his situation?

Ranaivo is on the Town Council in his small city, and at the same time he is a member of his Parish Committee. One day, the impending arrival of an important official is announced. The Town Council goes about setting up a festive program. Among other things, a reception is scheduled where everyone will drink wine to the health of the guest of honour. It has been decided to take up a collection in the city to cover the costs of the reception. Ranaivo protests in vain against the whole plan, because he does not like the idea of taking part in a reception that he considers a dishonour rather than an honour, and furthermore because he is repelled by the thought that he himself as well as others must be made to pay for alcohol. Naturally he is free to refuse to associate with the proceedings, but if he does this, he will automatically be ranked with the opposition; and the consequences are all too obvious.

What can the Church say to him?

The Lycée students with whom young Ravao keeps company often hold dancing parties at each other's homes. These evenings are very popular with the young people, and some of them say that dancing is one of the "musts" in modern life. It is thus customary, or at least "fashionable" to attend these parties where the sought-after "atmosphere" is to be found. However, it must be admitted that alongside the sandwiches that are provided for sustenance, there are also liquid refreshments to quench the dancers' thirst. Officially, these are fruit drinks or Coca Cola, but bottles of alcohol can nearly always be found under the table or in an adjacent room. The young people dance, and sing, and laugh. The music and the words on the records foster the sharing of confidences. No one overhears what is said, because of the noise. It is long past midnight when the young people leave one another to go home.

Since Ravao is very sociable and has a sprightly disposition, she receives frequent invitations to these parties. She is also a serious girl, and her parents have complete confidence in her. She likes to join the others, but the jibes she gets each time she declines an invitation are not at all appreciated by her. But she is Christian, and in the light of this, what attitude must she take?

There are just a few more cases which can be added to the list including Joseph's, Elsie's, and Omodo's.*) We do not presume to have dealt with every angle of the problem, but have merely selected some situations as a point of departure for the Conference's work. The situations mentioned pose no problem for the non-believer. They are only relatively serious for the ordinary citizen. But their outcome is of vital importance for the Christian.

Each Christian who encounters a difficulty can be compared to a sheep that has fallen into a gully and is waiting for its shepherd's help. Every one has the right to expect this help; and the shepherd in this case is the Church. The latter is duty bound to manifest its presence and its effectiveness.

From its standpoint, the world observes the Church, and does not let the slightest weakness go by without judging her most severely. It is perhaps useful to recall that the accusation most often leveled at the Church is that it spends too much time on otherworldly things, and does not show enough concern for people's present life. The Church must never lose sight of the fact that while it is not *of* this world, it is nevertheless really *in* this world, where it has not only its place, but also its own part to play: "You are the light of the world." (Matthew 5:14.)

In the last analysis, the effectiveness of the Church's action in this ever-changing world depends upon its ability to adapt to new situations. It must have the courage to give up a conservatism which makes it anachronistic in a continually changing world. The Church must so act that in every time and in every place, each of its members declares without shame and in a loud voice that he is Christian.

This is a strenuous task for the Church, and one which requires perpetually renewed effort.

*) Ref. Rev. Trobisch paper.

Is the Church ready to make this effort-

When it meets all those in this world who are groping in the darkness of inextricable situations and who are seeking tranquility and rest through the use of tons of tranquilizers, may the Church speak forth these words of Him who is its Head: "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I shall give you rest . . . learn from me and you will find rest for your souls." (Matthew 11:28—29.)

Yes, Africa is suffering, and Africa is waiting. It expects of the Church that it will truly proclaim the *Gospel*, "the Good News". Africa is waiting for the Church, to say "Rejoice, O beloved country, for I bring you peace. I bring you the Peace of the Lord Jesus."

The Church must not fail in this noble task if it does not want to fall short of its Master's expectations.

You, the Lutheran Church in Africa: are you prepared to carry out your task?

Reports Relating To Plenary Paper III

Report A: Word and Sacraments in Church Discipline

1. It is acknowledged that the Word of God is the proper, spiritual instrument for discipline and that this discipline is exercised every time the truth of the Word is proclaimed. It is further acknowledged that the New Testament never mentions exclusion from the Lord's Supper as a means of discipline. Resort to such a severe measure as excommunication is made only when a sinner, in spite of adequate soul-care and numerous admonitions to repent, remains adamantly unrepentant (see Matt. 18).
2. The purpose of church discipline is instruction which should lead to true repentance and a revitalized faith. This purpose has been very much misunderstood in many of the churches of Africa, however, and has too frequently become a vehicle of punishment rather than instruction. This "punishment", moreover, has been most prominently applied to cases of adultery/fornication, especially against female members, who thus are victimized. Not least has this understanding and an overemphasis on public confession led in turn to a virtual moratorium on the exercise of private confession and absolution — a prime responsibility of pastors but no less the prerogative and responsibility of every Christian.
3. It is imperative that the congregation's care of its members through a correct interpretation of church discipline be inaugurated where lacking and encouraged or improved where already present. Basically this would emphasize private confession and pastoral counseling. This will not be an easy overnight transition. Just as our members have been taught and drilled in the form of collective church discipline through councils and public confessions, in like manner, they can be introduced to private confession and absolution through pastoral counseling.

It is therefore

RECOMMENDED:

1. That instruction with respect to hearing private confession be made available to all pastors, and that congregational members be instructed in regard to private confession;

2. That the churches take necessary steps to guard and secure the confidential nature of private confession;
3. That the relationship between the Lord's Supper and church discipline be re-evaluated by the churches;
4. That the statement on church discipline adopted by the Antsirabé Conference be reaffirmed (Antsirabé Report, p. 95):
 "If an individual falls into sin and is under conviction, there should be opportunity for him to confess his sin privately and receive assurance of forgiveness and aid in overcoming temptation. If his sin is known to members of the congregation they should admonish him in love so that he may repent and be retained in the fellowship of the congregation (I Pet. 5:19—20; Col. 3:12—14; Gal. 6:1—2)."
5. That the churches replace legalistic practices in church discipline with pastoral and spiritual care (I Cor. 5).

Report B: Sexual Ethics, Marriage, Divorce and Polygamy

- i. Since polygamy is still a continuing problem in many areas, and since many churches are still uncertain as to how to deal with the problem, It is

RECOMMENDED:

That churches restudy the resolutions of the Antsirabé Conference and apply them to their situations. These resolutions say:

1. That we affirm that monogamy is God's plan for marriage, that it is the teaching of the New Testament, that it is the ideal relationship for the expression of love between a man and a woman, and is the proper atmosphere within which to develop a Christian family. The entering into a polygamous marriage by a Christian, whether through the normal channels of giving a dowry, or through inheritance, or gift, is an offense against the laws of the church.
2. That it is the responsibility of each church, being guided by the Word of God through the Holy Spirit, and being cognizant of the particular time, circumstances, and conditions in which it finds itself, to seek that way which on the one hand will not weaken her standards of faith and practice in the eyes of the world, and on the other hand, will not arbitrarily place upon some who desire its blessings a burden, the consequences of which may be in opposition to the very message of the Gospel.*)

Furthermore, to counteract the temptation to enter into polygamy, and to enable Christian families better to show forth to their neighbors a godly example in marriage it is

*) Antsirabé Report, page 177.

RECOMMENDED:

That a new emphasis be placed upon the task of congregation and pastoral counseling:

1. That young people be counselled as to the choice of marriage partners and the responsibilities of marriage;
 2. That husbands and wives be counselled as to the partnership responsibilities involved in marriage, including planned parenthood;
 3. That fathers and mothers be counselled as to their joint responsibilities in nurturing their children in the way of life;
 4. That special efforts be made to patiently, lovingly and forgivingly counsel and help those who have fallen into immorality and sexual sin;
 5. That concerned and patient efforts be made to counsel people with special marriage problems such as separated couples, divorced persons, and polygamist households that they come to know the will of God for them; and
 6. That the subject of baptized polygamists continue to be studied in a framework of pastoral and congregational counseling.
- II. In view of the rapid social change taking place in Africa today, it is

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the LWF investigate ways and means of training marriage counselors in Africa;
 2. That this investigation be done in consultation with the Department of Home and Family Life of the All Africa Conference of Churches which has already undertaken some study in this direction.
- III. Recognizing the heavy response to Pastor Walter Trobisch's counseling by mail, which indicates that a widespread need is being met, be it

RESOLVED:

That we encourage Pastor Walter Trobisch and his staff to continue in cooperation with the various regional churches of Africa the fine work which they have begun.

Report C: Individual Freedom and Christian Obligation —

A Resolution on Social Responsibility

The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference

1. Recalling the teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the heritage of the Lutheran Church from the Reformation which obligates the Lutheran churches to social responsibility;
2. Facing far-reaching changes and historical transition in the societies in which Lutheran churches live;
3. Recognizing the manifold human problems, caused by the emerging of new and unfamiliar political, economic, social and cultural structures

which are often breaking down traditional African patterns, as well as traditional values and norms;

4. Expressing its appreciation of all the work which has been done in the past or is presently carried on by the churches in the area of social action;
5. Emphasizing the necessity of establishing functional activities and further augmenting the various social activities to meet concrete human needs in a responsible and effective manner,

RECOMMENDS:

1. That each church appoint Social Action Committees with the following goals:
 - a. To evaluate relevant social studies;
 - b. To develop adequate methods for social action on the part of the churches, congregations, and their institutions;
 - c. To establish, sponsor and arrange courses for pastors and laymen such as teachers, medical personnel, etc. to enrich and broaden their knowledge and insights in the fundamentals of Christian social responsibility, and equip them for action, enabling the Church thereby to fulfill its obligation in proclamation, counselling, diaconia, education and stewardship in a broad sense.
2. That these committees receive assistance to fulfill their functions in the following manner:
 - a. By utilizing all existing consultative services such as the LWF, the AACC and its appropriate department, and other national and international agencies.
 - b. By coordinating the activities of the social action committees of the Lutheran churches in Africa in order to share experience and insights as well as establish joint activities, and also with other churches and agencies, in order to avoid unnecessary duplication. This coordination shall take place by establishing an All Africa Advisory Committee on Social Action which will be made up of representatives of each Lutheran church's social action committee. This committee shall be convened when appropriate by the LWF.
3. That the All Africa Lutheran Conference requests the LWF to take the necessary action to explore the possibilities of establishing an ecumenical center to provide expert and leadership training which would enable the churches to have adequate personnel for effective implementation of their social responsibility. Should an ecumenical center not prove feasible the LWF should explore the possibilities of establishing a Lutheran center of this type. Such a Lutheran center would only come into existence when the Lutheran churches in Africa, after having received the report based on the requisite exploration, request it.

Plenary Paper IV

THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN SOCIETY AND IN THE STATE

Louis Rameliarison*

I. Society: Some Aspects of Its Transformation

Society is a given group of living generations whose members are united by emotional bonds and inter-relationship which ensure its organic, social and cultural perpetuation. As for the community, it is made up of a group of people united by a consensus for the mutual interest or common purpose; it establishes institutions and rules.

In our times, the solid bases of society have been completely upset in both Africa and Madagascar. The time is past when capital importance was given to the tribe and the family, when the important role was that of the "chief", and each human being was only a part of the group, working for the community, adopting the common beliefs and worshipping the village idols. Our age has its own characteristic systems of administrative and political organization. Elected representatives who work for the state take first place in society. Each human being has become a person, responsible for his acts, who is called upon to assume civic and social responsibilities (universal suffrage . . .). The concept of the nation is appearing, frontiers, sometimes conventional and artificial, have been pushed back; the little country once occupied by the tribe and the clan has become an immense country which often exists only in theory. New communities have been integrated into the old one, and associations of different types have appeared: political parties, cooperatives, trade unions and religious communities . . .

How can the Church establish itself in this changing society, and how should it act?

II. The Church in the Villages and in the Big Cities

Villages are increasingly made up of old people, unmarried women and very young children. The able-bodied go to the cities. Nonetheless, there is more and more contact with the outside world: the winding paths are becoming wide roads, shops and schools are being established, representatives of the health, rural promotion, information and elementary education ser-

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vices are increasing their visits. Transistors, radios and newspapers bring the daily news to each villager.

The village also remains the real home of those who earn money in town, for they return to beautify their ancestral homes, modernize the family tombs and construct beautiful residences which bring them greater prestige than that enjoyed by the old chief who has remained faithful to his fief, to his "little homeland". Since independence, customs abandoned during colonization have begun to reappear in the villages, which thus risk returning to paganism.

It is no longer the Church's task to convert groups, but persons, since belief and faith no longer belong to the clan as a whole, and each individual is free to join the religion of his choice. However, the Church's role has not been reduced since the emancipation of the villagers; in the villages it should help the state in the educational and intellectual fields (struggle against illiteracy, education, cultural activities) as well as from the health and social point of view (practical health counselling, training of mothers of families . . .). Above all, the Church should ensure that Christians respect the Word of God every day of their life, and that they do not let themselves be corrupted by pagan customs and ways.

For those who leave the village and go to the big cities, life changes completely: the working hours, lodging, food habits and environment are all new and different. These people may become bewildered and depressed. The individual becomes an anonymous unit within the group; his house is only a dormitory, his neighbors are always strangers. The village taboos, the authority of the family, the ascendancy of the elders and the fear of fetishes no longer influence his new existence. He tries what used to be forbidden, and finds it does not kill him. City life accentuates class and social differences, and gives rise to numerous temptations, for the individual wants to enjoy the prosperity and comfort of those who have "arrived". After working hours and on the days of rest the city-dweller always seeks to amuse himself and to relax; in his free time he easily accepts the occupations offered which may be immoral or else merely for purposes of propaganda and publicity. Others, who have received some education in the city, are happy there and refuse to return to their village even if they are out of work; this, by the way, is what causes that juvenile delinquency which repudiates the value of culture, the respect of persons and the dignity of love. Nationalistic, reactionary or totalitarian movements are created and maintained. Communities unknown in the villages are open to all: political parties, trade unions, sport associations, miscellaneous clubs . . .

Is the Church an isolated place, unaware of the problems of city-dwellers? Are the churches adequately informed of the particular situation in their city? Are they aware of the living conditions of those who live in those miserable hovels, those uncomfortable shanties? Do they realize how the poverty and need of their families can harm children and young people? Should not the Church do good works and fight such plagues? The Church should revise its means of spreading the Gospel; it should go out and seek people. Does it refuse to enter certain so-called places of ill repute? We need worker-ministers, ministers and Christians who will bring comfort and the

good news everywhere. The Church should not wait for people to come, but should go out and seek them. The Church should not only be present in spiritual life but in everyday life as well.

III. *The Conflict of Generations*

The rapid changes have caused shocks which are all the more violent because unexpected. "For modern African youth, the family can no longer be their universe, as it was for their ancestors for centuries. The family is no longer an educational and economic institution in which young people adjust and take part in the ancestral way of life handed down from time immemorial" (*Africa in Transition*, 1962, p. 61). Adults can either regard these changes with admiration, because their life is more comfortable or they are better-off, or else they can set up a lively opposition to them because their beloved routine is upset and their treasured privileges questioned. But young people react enthusiastically. For a long time civilization was considered to be the prerogative of the white people and a few of the privileged. But now young people wish to learn, to know more, to be up-to-date, to break with tradition. The white colonizers have always been admired and imitated; young people are influenced by their civilization and aspire to their culture. But has society given young people enough strength of character and good judgment for them to be able to distinguish good from evil in everything that is open to them? Perhaps society itself is ailing, since it only fosters the struggle for money and prestige, the search for pleasure and an easy life, the sole concern with well-being and comfort. Do not the adults and parents who reproach young people with their delinquency partake of the amusements and spectacles forbidden to their children? The difference in the educational level of adults and young people only serves to widen the gap between the generations. Present-day education fosters a critical spirit and a rational intelligence which make it possible to take an objective view of all phenomena. What young people learn often destroys the beliefs of their elders. Those who wish to stick to their traditions are then dubbed as "failures", "squares" or "drags".

Do we not need parent's groups or schools where adults can at least be informed of what their children are trying to do, and thus become more able to advise and guide them? This would help us to avoid the misdeeds of the "Mods", "Rockers", "J.D.", "Halbstarke", "Raggare", "blousons noirs" and other groups of juvenile delinquents all over the world.

Whether in the family, at school or at church, those whom young people accept as their intellectual and moral superiors will have the most authority over them. Has the present-day Church trained enough ministers who can meet this need?

The Church also risks becoming a system of moral precepts or rules of life. The catechumens and the candidates for confirmation have only to learn their catechism by heart and to recite it before a minister or a catechism teacher, who is not concerned about changing their lives completely and giving them a completely new life in Christ which is the sole characteristic of all real conversions.

Young people and, in fact, all people, are entirely responsible for their actions and that responsibility can only be complete through a liberty that has been crucified in Jesus Christ. Of course, the main role of the family and church is to lead the child and the young person towards a responsible freedom within the framework of Christian precepts.

Is the Church afraid of becoming part of the very life of young people? Is it afraid to give them a share of responsibility within the community? Are church services attractive to young people and do they suit their psychology? What about cultural activities? And leisure activities? We can no longer contest the need to have ministers responsible for young people who are able to talk and live with them.

The Church does not attract young people, and conflicts arise because Christians are not "committed" enough. We speak of love of one's neighbor, preach self-sacrifice, speak of the equality of all the children of God, but racial questions still cause a certain uneasiness with the Church. Are the missionaries united with the people of Africa and Madagascar in their common task, that of announcing to the world the good news of the grace of God? It is quite disturbing to see social inequality exist among the servants of the same Lord: some drive automobiles from one beautiful residence to another, while others sweat and toil over hill and dale to visit the members of their parish. Do not problems of caste continue to exist among the people of the same parish and create sub-groups within the community?

The Church should also carry on its struggle in this conflict between the generations. It must not leave people to themselves, and remember them only when they have committed an offence. The Church should go and seek the people where they live and as they are, in order to give them life and to become part of their life.

IV. The Church's Role Within the State

The state and the Church are two institutions in which God manifests His rule over mankind. Both receive their authority from God and exercise their role in different ways. The state protects man, procures him an atmosphere of security, controls his behavior and his activities, his relations to his fellow-men. The Church leads man towards the love of God and towards the love for his neighbor. It proclaims the word and the kingdom of the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.

The first concern of all present African states is to improve the economic and social life of the nation. The first preoccupation of each state is to find its honorable place among the nations. What is important is the internal organization of each country as well as international relations and organizations. The Church is the last concern, the material side taking precedence over the spiritual.

Often the Church is reduced to a minority, because, lost in the midst of an unbelieving nation, it is often nothing but a weak and neglected organism at the side of a non-Christian religion adopted by the whole nation or with a considerable number of adherents; often doctrines that oppose each other, rites that diverge, divide and thereby weaken the Church. In spite of this

weakness — due to its minority or to the great number of sects — does the Christian Church have its place, should it make a place for itself in order not to fail in its very reason for existence and in order not to neglect its role? Facing theism, facing indifference, facing non-Christian religions which develop in numerous states, should not the Christian Church — in order to proclaim forcefully and effectively God's will with all nations — be one and thus tear down walls that divide it?

Now that the Church is independent and must cover its own material and financial needs, it seems one more burden upon the nation. Sometimes the Church disappears completely from the life of the nation. It is silent, and we hear only of political parties, or rather of the party in power. It is not the Church's role to form a political party in addition to those already in existence but the Church should not, at any rate, be afraid of proclaiming, whenever necessary, truth, justice and love, in accordance with God's word. It should not be afraid to help seek solutions to present-day national and international problems. If the Church sometimes appears weak, is it because of its transcendence or because of its isolation?

The members of the Church are also members of temporal society, and should not remain outside the life of their time. It is the Church's duty to ensure the civic education of all Christians.

Present-day society also needs Christian politicians, but they should not forget that they are the witnesses of Jesus and should have a Christian influence on those around them and not let themselves be corrupted by their environment. In order to be able to act in full freedom and in order not to hamper the liberty of his brethren and fellow-men, the Christian should not combine a post of political authority with a post of authority within the Church.

The Church is the body of Christ in the world, it is a living reality, it should make its presence manifest.

V. The Permanence Within the Church

The world is changing, evolving. More than ever the Church should be alert and active. Its nature, its reasons for existence are unchanged; it remains the body of Christ that invites men to enter into this sheepfold of the Lord and take part in the kingdom of the redeemed. It should keep in touch with developments and progress. The Church should make use of all modern means to accomplish its mission; it is not isolated from the world, it is in the world. The Church is the same throughout the centuries; the love of God, the redemption in Christ are truths, valid at all times. Its means of action deserve to be adapted to different times, to different situations. Man always needs an absolute, an unchanging power. The Church should bring him this truth:

JESUS CHRIST

Section Paper IV:1

THE CHURCH IN VILLAGE AND CITY

Roland J. Payne*)

Almost two thousand years ago Africa welcomed the world's Savior when the Babe of Bethlehem was rushed to Egypt to escape the wrath of a jealous king called Herod. Since that time, and especially during the last century, the missionary enterprise of the Christian Church was considered to be a glorius campaign, through which the people of God were to bring the world into subjection to the King of Kings. The meaning of the Great Commission was clear. To question it was to be disloyal. But within the last few years what was once a crusade has been transformed into a complicated and far-reaching problem, bristling with questions which touch not only administration and methods of work, but the validity of the enterprise itself, and ultimately the fundamental assumptions of the Christian religion.

Today the Church in Africa is faced with very grave problems. In earlier days of the missionary enterprise, it was the Gospel that fashioned the life of the people. Now the Gospel has been pushed out of the center by many other influences. So the Church has to maintain itself in debate and sometimes in conflict with the world that surrounds it.

On one side the Church is faced by secularism, represented mainly by the white and black races who have embraced western culture, and on the other side by the old heathen way of thinking — magical and mythical — which always imperils the existence of the Church of our Lord.

Faced by such overwhelming problems, what should be the primary aim of the Church in the village and city? What actually transpires in the heart of an African when he comes under the influence of the Gospel? Is it sufficient to say that the Gospel is Jesus Christ, and if so, just what does that mean? What is the relation of Christianity to animism; of Christ to the evil spirits and to the spirits of ancestor-worship? What should be the attitude of the Church to the errors found in animism, and the elements of truth found in it?

The significance of primitive religion has long been overlooked. The discussion which follows does not overlook the inadequacies, the overpowering place of fear, the belief in magic and witchcraft, and the other

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crude practices and forms of expressions. But there is a conviction that there are values here for the fullest interpretation of God's will; and here are to be found new helps in understanding the meaning of the Gospel of Christ.

One of the most creative minds of Africa, and a devout Christian who has helped to spread the Gospel in Africa, is Bishop Newell S. Booth. Concerning African religion he states:

God did not leave Himself without a witness among the tribesmen of Africa. All sons of God can profitably listen to that witness. It is expressed in certain emphases that can help in the realization of values achieved all too seldom in the religious life of our day. These emphases have enriched their own culture and can become worthy contributions to world-wide religious living.¹⁾

I agree with Bishop Booth that one of the great values in African animism is the *spiritual interpretation of the physical world*.

The African senses spirits in things. Everything is related to the spiritual. One cannot understand any object until one studies the dynamic power — the spirit that is part of the thing. The African insists that the material interpretation of the universe is not sufficient explanation of his experiences. The material interpretation of the universe has cut through our spiritual interpretation of God. Is the African making a contribution to the Church by his persistence in maintaining the spiritual character of the world? Is it possible for us to link his interpretation with our Christian interpretation of God in the world?

Another great value is the *unity of life in African animism*. Again Bishop Booth states:

The African's religion enters into all that they are. It becomes a unifying factor. Religion works all the time. It is religion that makes their gardens produce. They cannot reap their crop till they have consulted with the ancestors. And if they do worship, they will secure the help they need. No matter what aspect of the African's life we consider, we cannot divorce it from religion. With us worship tends to become a religious institution rather than an aspect of living. The African in the village does not separate religion from work, or from social life. Family or personal matters, economic or social questions are all unified and supported by religion.²⁾

Are we willing to give Christian interpretation to these emphases in the religious life of the villagers? Are these emphases able to give substantial help in resolving some of the troublesome divisions of modern experience — material, spiritual, individual and social? Can the Church of Jesus Christ

¹⁾ Newell S. Booth, *The Cross Over Africa*, New York: The Friendship Press, 1945, p. 66.

²⁾ Newell S. Booth, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

open the eyes of the African to see beyond the ancestral spirits the Great Spirit — God, who is also the Great Chief of the great tribe of humanity?

All of us who are familiar with African village life will agree that cohesion of the group is an element of social solidarity as illustrated by the activities of the clan. The clan is a group of related families which claim to be descended from a common ancestor. The relationship is eternally binding and cannot be dissolved, even by death. It is closely linked with the religious life. Primarily, the ancestors who are worshipped are clan members.

It is the clan that gives security to the African. He is conscious of the fact that he is not dependent on his own resources. The clan furnishes the social security legislation of the people. It is a community of brothers, and society built on equality.

Is there a Christian principle involved here about the cohesion of the family? The Gospel is preached to the villagers on individual basis, with the belief that when the individual is converted, he in turn will convert the next individual, and so forth. Because of the cohesion of the group in a village life, is it not time for the church to try another approach in bringing the Gospel to the villagers — that is conversion by clan or tribe, and not on individual basis alone? In the New Testament when the head of the house was converted, all the members of his household were also converted. Examples are Cornelius (Acts 10:23—48); Lydia (Acts 16:13—15); the Jailer at Philippi (Acts 16:28—34).

I know the difficulties some of our evangelists encounter when they preach in the villages. Usually more women than men are willing to listen to the message of the Gospel and even become Christians. But some are afraid of their husbands. Often a jealous husband will not allow his wife or wives to attend a Christian service at night, for fear the evangelist or some other man will make love to his wife or wives. In African the group is more important than the individual. Western Christianity stresses too much personal salvation of the individual.

It was stated in the first part of this paper that the Gospel has now been pushed out of the center by many other influences, among two important ones are nationalism and the impact of industry on city and urban life.

Nationalism: In 1869, writing from Bambarre near Lake Tanganyika to his son Thomas, David Livingstone made this prophecy: "The day for Africa is yet to come." That prophecy is being fulfilled in the last half of the twentieth century. The day for Africa has come; it has come with such frightening rapidity that some wonder if the day for Africa has not come too soon.

In some parts of Africa nationalism is a real threat to the Christian Church in the villages and cities. There is imminent danger of loyalty to the nation being considered paramount above the loyalty to God. There is danger under cover of nationalism of setting up false gods. In some parts of Africa instead of "seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness", we hear the paraphrase of the above quotation in another quotation thus: "Seek ye first the political kingdom, and everything else will be

yours." The church that does not deviate to exalt the national taste, but exalts Christ only, is in danger of being labelled "pro-foreign". Many missionaries and even some Africans have been deported for this very reason.

What does national freedom mean for the African Christian? Does it mean to return evil for evil? Does it mean Africa for the Africans only? Can there be any real freedom if there is no faith to live that freedom by? Has "tomorrow" come too soon for Africa? Is Christian education needed to maintain that "tomorrow" for Africa? Will the African Christians be persecuted if they do not worship the national leader? The Church indeed should have a dynamic message for nationalism.

The Impact of Industry on City and Urban Life: All over Africa streams of adventurous young people are leaving their villages and heading for the cities and large plantations to make a livelihood for themselves and to enjoy the power and privileges of the white man's "god" — money.³⁾

The African is by nature a religious being, but he has been easy prey for the godless, secular materialism which has come in the wake of Western scientific advancement. He has experienced man's power to change his environment. He has seen science create for him a world of economic progress and social uplift. By these efforts he is now able through the labor of his hands to secure what he needs for his comfort. He is no longer under tribal obligation. With his money he is able to bribe government officials to grant him favors and privileges to take advantage of his own people.

The pursuit of comforts and luxuries is a real problem for the Church. When young people who have been taught the rudiments of the Christian Gospel in their village come in contact with life in the cities and on large plantations, their outlook on life changes radically. Money has now become their god. Even those who attend schools and who are graduates of church-supported schools seem to forget the Church when they graduate. They do not need the Church anymore. Some even accuse the church of impeding their claim to fame, that they would have been far better off in the social and political life of their country, if they had not wasted their time listening to missionaries who did not practise what they preach. They see what the power of money has done for the advancement of those who never went to school. And so they too are determined to advance themselves at any cost.

There are many attractions in the towns and cities which are responsible for the exodus of the people from the villages. They are drawn by promise of opportunity, and freedom from taxes. They are seeking relief from forced labor where it is practiced, and from porter work (communal labor). They have more freedom in the cities as regards tribal traditions. Young men can get married without paying dowry and no interference from their elders.

But as there are attractions there are also pitfalls and hindrances in the cities. Without some degree of training, skill and aptitude at finding work, the result is often disillusionment and delinquency. People are regarded as parasites if they have no lodging place or work. With no work to earn a

³⁾ One European traveler in Africa actually referred to his money as his god.

livelihood, they drift away into bad practices like stealing, drinking, prostitution, etc. There is no real community life in the cities. Everybody is for himself and no concern for the next person. The transition from a "hoe" to a "cash" economy brings with it new attitudes which tend to promote selfishness and individualism.

From this we can readily see that the "industrial revolution" of tropical Africa presents the Church with grave problems. What steps should the Church take in solving these problems? What difficulties will the Church face in trying to find solution for these problems?

The intention of this paper is to ask questions for discussion and not to answer the questions. Here then are some random thoughts in the form of questions:

1. Is there a need for a workable system of membership referral, in an effort to conserve the known member we now have? Does the Church need to concentrate its resources on ministering to village and rural people? What about improved training of pastors and lay leaders for their service in village life and city life? What about the increase in adult education, not only in literacy, but to interpret the trends of the times, the reasons and forces of change, isolate and examine the problems that arise both to the village and city folds?
2. In a time of growing population mobility and various forces that break up village patterns of life and stress individualism, is it necessary to preserve and foster the concept of the people of God (the New Tribe)? How can we emphasize the essential unity of the church so the individual may feel at home among any Christian group as he moves from one area to another? In addition to sense of identity as a national church, should there be a closer identification with one another as the people of God in greater and closer inter-church activities in the villages and cities, yea, within the nation?
3. Government direction has influenced village and rural life, even in the furtherance of the Christian mission. Through the aid and cooperation of the government Christianity has gained a firm hold in some rural areas. Church schools and hospitals are subsidized by government. Will this not have serious consequences if the Church is too dependent upon the government?
4. In order that the Church may exert a stabilizing influence among a shifting population, should it encourage Christian people to remain in and develop their rural communities? If so, should a wide circulation of Christian literature in the indigenous languages, or a commonly understood language, be used effectively to promote such a program? Should some of the large church institutions be transferred to rural areas, so that the rural people may be trained in their communities and find employment there? How can the Church tap the potential among rural men and women for leadership both in homes and communities?
5. Should the Church have pilot projects? Should it use its resources to provide guidance for maintaining a small farm on a sound economic

basis? Should the Church encourage its members to acquire land and to establish farmers' cooperatives? Is the agricultural missionary to be primarily a technical worker in charge of his own project, or a church worker with special skills to be used by the national church as it sees fit?

6. As a missionary, by identifying myself with the weak, struggling Christian community, will I not tend to cut myself off from the non-Christians and the larger technical assistance programs existing in some countries?
7. With the discovery of rich minerals governments have given mining concessions to foreign corporations, concessions sometimes covering vast areas inhabited by villagers who are consequently moved into the interior. Will the villager who has been pushed into the interior, because his land has been granted to the church and other concessions, consider the church a feudal institution? How can the Church render its ministry effectively to a villager who is in such a state of mind? How can village Christians in the newly developing countries be interested in serving others, when they themselves are so desperately poor, and often the objects of discrimination on the part of non-Christian governments?
8. Community development programs act as instruments of change in relation to traditional social attitudes and behaviors. Since the values and goals of community development are generally in accord with the Christian understanding of society, should the Church cooperate with governments and non-Christian agencies to initiate such programs? Where the people in the area are not willing to cooperate, should the Church do it alone? How can we avoid duplication of effort, repetition of errors, and actual competition between rural missions and the newer service agencies sponsoring projects of self help?
9. In all of its programs for community service, does the village church need to be mindful of the dominant psychology of rural people? (By this I mean where changes have to be made in the interest of sound social and economic development, the Church should seek to avoid alienating its members by unwise measures. The Church also should not dare to give way to the ingrained notions of its members so much that it becomes the last stronghold of reactionary elements in its community.) Should the Church bring dignity to labor both in the villages and cities? Many educated Africans look upon manual labor as below their dignity. "By the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread." Was that a curse by an angry deity?
10. Should the Church try to encourage governments and industries to decentralize the economy so that production is not localized in a few centers? Should this only be related to the location products (as iron ore), or also to power, roads, population and land reforms?

All the above questions involve social activities. Should the Church use

such social activities as dances, dramas, films, Bible quizzes, etc. to attract people to God? Or do these activities have spiritual impact on them?

The Church will face many difficulties in trying to solve these problems. Some of the difficulties will be: a) lack of cooperation and interest of the church members towards social services; b) lack of finance — support from abroad is scant and uncertain; c) difficulty in obtaining well-educated pastors; d) lack of respect of well-educated people towards the less educated clergymen.

In spite of all these difficulties and surmounting problems, I am confident the Christian Church can find a way to solve the problems. Christianity comes to the African as a redemption from his fears. Christ is redeeming the African to a life of love and service, and carrying him forward from his own values to the fuller understanding of God's plan for his life. The way of the cross is truly the way for Africans. The church that understands this is the church that cannot fail — she dare not fail!

Section Paper IV:3

THE CONFLICT OF GENERATIONS

Solomon Inquai*)

Africa is a continent in transition. When one ponders the history of mankind, one finds that man has been perpetually in a state of transition. Human progress has meant constant change; change in family and social structures, in modes of life, in value systems. Man has always equated change with progress and well-being — and true enough, life through the ages has improved a great deal for a greater part of humanity. Mankind today knows more of this world, of the cause and effect relationship of nature.

Yet, a new idea or a way of life has opponents as well as proponents. Consequently, change has always meant misunderstanding and conflict. One cannot refrain from asking: "Why are there always some who fail to grasp reality even in the face of concrete evidence? Why do others campaign against the general good, and why are some intent on destroying social institutions?"

Africa, as stated above, is a continent in transition. Its people are changing politically, socially and economically. What is more, the young are, little by little, acquiring modern education. In a society where age has meant a great deal in the social hierarchy education and being educated are fast reducing the value of age. Can the two exist side by side? For how long?

The young so-called educated generation does not think so. The young are not, to a great extent, worried about traditional institutions and social mores. What the youth or the present generation is worried about is the general progress of society. Youth are constantly asking the question: How can we get where the developed countries are now? This is not to say that everybody is conscientious and constructive. On the contrary, many are self-centered and individualistic and have no notion of the general good.

For the most part, the young seem to take their cue from the West. They try to imitate Western ways of life, Western standards and Western values. Why is this so? Is the West the only standard to emulate?

In addition, the youth of the present generation have read the works of social thinkers and philosophers of both East and West. They have heard

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about the present-day social institutions. Some, they seem to have grasped quite well. Of others, they have only distorted notions. Yet, they try to set guide lines for their daily actions. However, because of the nature of things, of home-grown values, and systems that have some effect on their thinking, most of the time these youth fail to come out with a clear philosophy of life.

The most glaring of the impregnation of the young minds with Western ideas and values, and with the philosophies and social thinking of the East and West, is indifference — to religion, the Church and some of the things that the Church stands for. An educated Ethiopian cannot feel comfortable any longer with the fatalistic philosophy of the Church. To him, this is due to lack of education and the association of things scientific. He can no more attribute every crop failure, sickness, and mishap to the hands of God. He rather explains the causes and tries to find the remedy.

Is the Church possibly mistaken? Is it behind the times? Does it need to keep pace with the twentieth century? Does it have any contribution to make towards social change and progress?

Take the case of young Catholic parents who are aware of the problem of population explosion, who know the means for checking this problem, and have set their minds on obtaining decent standards of living. Can they, in the face of reality, abide by the teaching of the Church on birth control? How far does one surrender what he believes to be honest and true? Should one continue to neglect scientific evidence in order to abide by the teachings of the Church? Or is the Church properly unscientific in its teachings?

Then there is the question of the image of the Church. We know too well that the Church, in many parts of this continent, is a new-comer. The Church has remained an institution of the missionaries who were, for the most part, identified with colonizers. Would one be endangering his career if one identified himself with an institution which, for the most part, is considered foreign? What are we doing to create an indigenous Church dedicated to national well-being?

We all know that many people have had the taste of modern education in mission schools. Yet, today one cannot discuss the educational contribution of the Church without mentioning how restrictive, narrow and shallow it has been. In mission schools our fathers were given just enough to carry on the work of the Church. The preaching of the Gospel is and should be the primary aim of the Church. However, the Church can no longer afford to maintain sub-standard schools. For one thing, competition is keen. What is more, this might be construed as a form of oppression of the young. How good is the image of the Church as an educator? How can the Church improve and enhance this image?

Someone once told the writer that no souls are saved after the first twenty minutes of a sermon. How true! The young cannot stand preaching for more than twenty minutes. In light of this fact, it is high time that the Church reviewed its activities. What has the Church done, if anything, to meet the daily needs of bachelors and young families? Can we organize anything that will keep the new generation interested for any period of time?

Perhaps one other subject of conflict, and consequently of dissention among the youth is the puritanical teaching of the Church on the subject of morality and different forms of recreation. Is it really sinful to smoke, for a girl to wear lipstick and to be dressed in the latest fashion of Paris, for a couple to go to the movies for their evening recreation?

The Church has taught our fathers that these and other similar activities are sinful and must be avoided. Now that the parent generation is practising these, inevitably conflict ensues; what positive contributions in modes of recreation can the Church suggest to this more affluent generation?

There is the desire among some older groups of people for a clear dichotomy between the Christian and the infidel. How true is this in the teaching of the Church?

So much for the discussion of some of the fragmentary reasons behind the conflict of generations. But have we really touched upon the matter? Do we know the true reasons?

The conflict in every country in this vast continent is culture bound. No two countries in Africa, despite proximity and similarity in historical backgrounds, are the same. Thus youth react to different situations in their own way. In general, the African is religious, but is he Christian? We have seen above that the present generation takes its cue from the West. The Church for the Africans, by and large, is a Western institution. How is the Church faring in the Western world? Does it have the fire and the zeal that accompanied mission work in Africa and elsewhere? How bright is it in the West?

Many a youth has been to far-off places in the Western world. He has seen the magnificent edifices that once inspired mission work. He has seen how beautiful and yet how empty most of these edifices now are. Many a youth has also seen the material progress and spiritual depravity of the Western man. He is not being discriminating when he chooses both. The emphasis is, of course, upon material progress.

In summing up, one can say: conflict, apparent or real, exists between the old and young, and this conflict is based on the question of certain established institutions and values of society. Among them is the Church. To the young, the Church is unscientific, fatalistic, etc. The people who pass judgment see nothing wrong in established institutions — they think that this generation must revert to the old. They prefer the status quo to progress and change.

What has the older generation to learn of values in the twentieth century, and the youth to preserve from the old? How should the Church project itself to the youth? What is the calibre of its clergy, its lay leaders? Have they recognized their youth or are they constantly blaming them? Is there anything in the work of private and public agencies that is worth trying in the Church? Methods of teaching secular education are constantly changing. How do we give religious education? Finally, how indigenous in composition and work habits is the Church?

Section Paper IV:3

THE NATION, POLITICS AND THE CHURCH

Sven Rubenson*)

The purpose of this brief paper is simply to introduce some of the issues involved in the relationships between the church on one hand and the nation or state on the other, and to raise some questions about the right attitude of the Christian towards participation in political activities.

The questions are as old as the Christian faith in this world. Christ himself was asked for a ruling on whether or not the Jews were permitted to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor (Mat. 22:17). Peter and Paul found it necessary to inform their Christian brethren of their obligations towards state authorities (I Pet. 2:13—15; Romans 13:1—6). As for the history of the Church it would probably be difficult to think of any pattern of relationship between the state and the organized church that has not been tried, for the Church has placed itself above as well as under or beside the state; it has at times completely separated itself from the state or almost merged with it. The individual Christian has tried everything from ruling the world to complete social, not to say physical, withdrawal.

At the heart of the problem is the calling to be *in*, but not *of* the world. "... they are strangers in the world, as I am. I pray thee, not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one" (John 17:15—19). The Christian shares with all other human beings the characteristics of being the child of God, placed in this world to "tend the garden" with all the duties and privileges this carries with it, including full participation in the social and political life of his nation. He is a "stranger" only inasmuch as his experience of the forgiveness of sin and of discipleship in the way of the cross makes him so. The tension and at times painfully acute conflict that arises from this double citizenship — in a nation and in the kingdom of God (John 18:33—36) — is, however, a reality whether the state is called Christian or secular and whatever form the relationship between state and Church has taken.

As far as Africa is concerned, and the whole modern world for that matter, the secular state, a governmental organization with widely diversified

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educational, economic and social activities but without any expressed religious foundations, is increasingly gaining ground. This type of state seems to be the partner with which the Church in Africa will have to work in serving the nation. The important thing is for the Church to maintain that both are instituted by God to serve men, the state basically to administer protection and justice, the Church to make known the grace of God in Jesus Christ.

It is only in theory, however, that this difference in functions prevents mutual interference, because a) all citizens are called to make a constructive contribution to their nation within the social order and what Christian citizens do is often equated with Church action; b) the Church itself or its spokesmen are bound to speak out if and when the state either fails to uphold justice or intrudes into spheres of human life over which Caesar has no say.

This would seem to mean that the function of the Church *per se* in politics is instructive and corrective. Its leadership and clergy should a) deliberately seek answers to the problems of justice in the nation, b) instruct the members of the Church of their findings, and c) openly and fearlessly criticize violation of justice, suppression of human rights, corruption in its manifold shapes, and the type of excessive nationalism which idolizes the nation or its leader.

On the other hand there seems to be strong agreement among many church leaders today that the Church should not seek political influence, never act as a party or a political group, nor even lend its name to political parties or programs. The platform of a spokesman of the Church criticizing political, social or economic evils should be that of the prophet, not the politician, and it should make no difference to him whether the rights of the Christian community are involved or not.

Most, if not all, African nations today are ethnically, culturally and religiously pluralistic societies in a stage of rapid social and political change. This is bound to produce much tension and many clashes of opinion, sometimes with and sometimes without ethical implications. In this situation it would seem advisable for people charged with pastoral work to refrain from participation in purely political activities. Should not the pastor above all be a man to whom people from various parties or factions can go with confidence and be met with love? If he involves himself in the strife of temporal society, does he not endanger his very usefulness as a shepherd of souls and a peace-maker when conflicts reach the personal level where a man might lose his soul or a whole community or nation their right mind? On the other hand there is the danger of the pastor becoming isolated from his flock because of lack of identification with them, and the understanding of the politically active layman for the position of his pastor is essential.

As for the Christian layman — or the pastor who may be temporarily relieved from the immediate care for his congregation — it would be difficult to lay down any other rule for political conduct than the obedience of an enlightened conscience. Obviously the rough and ready ways of political life, the lust for power, and the opportunities for personal gain, as well as the pressures of collective action present temptations for the

Christian in politics, and there is every reason for the Church to pray especially for those of its members who are active in government, political parties, trade unions, etc. In principle a Christian should not seek or wield political power in his own interest, nor should he use dishonest means of whatever kind to gain influential positions. The argument "I will do a lot of good in power" is no excuse, for by the same token Christ could have accepted the offer of the devil to gain the power over the whole world (Luke 4:6—8).

In power the Christian should be more concerned about doing justice than demanding justice. There are the risks of identifying oneself with the aspirations of one's community, party or whole nation at the expense of truth. In international affairs the Christian should resist the nationalistic spirit of "right or wrong, my country".

Finally there is the political and spiritual question of obeying God more than man, even at the expense of suffering and death. When Ceasar asked for a loyalty that does not belong to him but God alone, when the state asks the Christian to carry out orders or participate in activities that violate his conscience, there is no other way open than to confess "Christ is Lord" and accept the consequences.

Reports Related To Plenary Paper IV

Report A: Nation, Politics, and the Church

The political situations in Africa present a widely divergent picture. The situation of the churches in Africa differs just as much. There are countries where the churches enjoy full liberty to preach, to act and find opportunities far beyond their resources, to contribute to the life, culture and destiny of their people. In some areas religious liberty is strictly limited. Members of several churches are denied basic human and political rights. In some parts of Africa governments violently suppress justice and prevent fundamental principles of Christian love and brotherhood.

But whatever the situation may be, all Christians are under an obligation to make a constructive contribution to their own country and to the whole world by upholding justice and seeking the good of all men, irrespective of race, tribe or creed. This they do while building their nation and shaping its religious, social, economic and political life.

The State and the Church are both of divine origin. The function of the State is to govern and to regulate the life of the nation. The function of the Church is to serve all men and declare the will of God for man's life.

The most important and unique contribution of the Christian Church to nation and politics is, however, her proclamation of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. It is this Gospel which enables Christians to participate fearlessly and courageously in the difficult and often ambiguous national and political decisions, where sin is often unavoidable. As they do this, they do not trust their own righteousness but only the righteousness of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who will uphold his followers against all principalities and powers.

It is therefore

RECOMMENDED:

That through its leadership and clergy each church should:

1. deliberately seek answers to the problems of justice in the nation;
2. inform its members of its findings;
3. in cooperation with all other Christian bodies openly and fearlessly criticize all violation of justice, suppression of human rights, corruption

in its manifold shapes, and that excessive nationalism which idolizes the nation or its leader;

4. teach its members to fulfill their obligations to the state faithfully and to honor the laws of the country in all matters not contrary to the Word of God;
5. fight ignorance, poverty and disease by promoting literacy, social security, opportunities for work, public health, etc.;
6. encourage its members to take an active part in political life in order to promote the welfare of the people while seeking God's constant guidance how to act wisely, justly, charitably, and in love to all men;
7. instruct its members, who responsibly participate in politics, to use their influence in creating mutual understanding between all citizens and in acting as instruments of reconciliation wherever unjust political measures have resulted in division and hatred.

Report B: The Church in Village and City

In view of the trend of the people to move from rural into urban areas it is

RECOMMENDED: That the churches

A. *In Rural Areas*

Exercise a total concern for the whole person, which could be expressed in:

1. intensification of the literacy efforts so that rural people might also benefit from the advances of the modern world, in agriculture, in health, and in other fields;
2. encouraging, where possible, government and industry to decentralize their projects in such a way that rural people might benefit from opportunities offered by them, yet remain rural;
3. Encouraging the establishment of reading rooms and meeting places where people might meet for casual fellowship in a Christian environment.

B. *In Urban Areas*

1. Again consider the following proposal from the Antsirabé Conference:

"The Lutheran Churches are most seriously asked to provide funds for youth work especially in the big cities, for the establishment of Christian youth centers, and for an effective ministry to students in higher education institutions, and to the rising intellectual class."*)

2. Do this work in cooperation with other Christian youth groups and clubs (e.g. YWCA and YWCA), working in the cities; and in matters of common concern work together with other churches.

*) Antsirabé Report, page 100.

- ches in pooling resources in personnel and money in setting up:
- a. chaplaincies in factories, etc.
 - b. hostels for youth,
 - c. charitable institutions, etc.
3. Encourage members wherever possible to participate in such activities as civic groups, for improved conditions for labor, housing, medical benefits, educational opportunities, etc.
 4. Establish closer contact between rural and urban congregations, e.g. through membership referrals;
 5. Be alert to the possibilities for church planting opportunities in new housing developments. One way of establishing contacts is by house to house visitations by both clergy and laymen;
 6. Encourage the various seminaries to give more attention to training their students for work in urban areas;

Be it further

RECOMMENDED:

That the Conference requests the LWF to investigate ways of helping the Church to utilize the new urban opportunities, e.g. by sending experts to study situations, advising existing churches, and train personnel on the spot.

Report C: The Conflict of Generations

Whereas the conference realizes that owing to the rapid social changes, there is a widening gap between the old and young generation, and

Whereas the conference maintains that the conflict of generations arises from the impact of the modern education which clashes with African traditions and culture, religiously, socially and economically, and

Whereas the conference realizes the difficulty of building a strong church or nation in an atmosphere of disunity and conflicts, and

Whereas the conference appreciates with gratefulness all that the Church had done with regard to the maintenance of the present thin link between the older and younger generations, and

Whereas the Church still feels it an incumbent duty upon her to reconcile these two factions,

Be it

RECOMMENDED to all the Lutheran churches in Africa that:

1. Every Christian home should not lose the first opportunity of teaching the young children the fear of the Lord and respect to all, even at the very tender age. "Train a child in the way he should go . . . he shall not depart from it" should be made more practical than theoretical.
2. The Church in counselling the youth should do so constructively with a combined aspect of the law and the gospel (i.e. the evangelical method) rather than challenging them with the pronouncement of God's wrath, thus creating an atmosphere of disrespect and hatred for the Church.

3. The youth and the aged should be recognized as co-responsible officers in our churches thus giving the young generation the opportunity to utilize their modern educational concepts, and also giving the older generation the opportunity to utilize their experience and insight.
4. The need for developing adequate procedures for dialogue be considered whereby the older generation can weave their concepts with those of the younger generation, each respecting the views of the other.
5. There should be a strong emphasis on strengthening and augmenting the already on-going youth work as it takes place in Sunday schools and youth organizations of various kinds. Particularly, a specific youth-leadership training should be developed in all our churches.
6. All efforts be made to arrest the exodus of our youth from villages to cities by reviving our almost-lost African traditional fine arts and culture through the establishment of handicraft centres to create occupations for their livelihood.
7. Where possible, and in areas where electricity is available, our churches in such areas should endeavor to own a projector and, with this visual aid, present pictures that reflect the Christian background.
8. Chaplains should be attached to all our educational institutions.
9. The conflict of generations be made subject for discussion at the theological training institutions, pastors' meetings, church elders' courses, etc.

Miscellaneous Resolutions

I. *Continuation of Theological Study Committees*

Following a resolution of the Antsirabé Conference regional theological study committees were established and assigned to work on specific topics. The study program was not, however, carried out as intended. The question of continuation was therefore raised.

The following recommendations came to the plenary from an ad hoc committee representing all the churches which had sent delegates to the conference:

1. Be it recommended that the following five topics be presented to the plenary. Following the plenary's approval these topics will be forwarded to the various churches for study. The topics are listed in order of priority:
 - a. Pastoral Care and Church Discipline
 - b. Church and State Relationship
 - c. Ecumenical Relationships
Relationships to other Churches
Young and old Churches
Relationship to the LWF
 - d. Sects and Syncretism
 - e. Indigenous Liturgy
2. Be it further recommended that out of this list each church choose one topic to be studied under coordination of the Lutheran World Federation, and one other topic within or outside the list which indicates a regional need and which can therefore be studied on a restricted, regional or local level. The Lutheran World Federation will choose two of the five topics and coordinate the studies that will be made on these two topics.
3. Be it recommended that churches concerned with the Christian approach to Islam be encouraged either to study this subject locally or to participate in the Islam in Africa Project.
4. Be it further recommended that, if possible, the seminaries of the

various churches organize and carry on the studies that have been proposed.

5. Be it also proposed that the studies be made in view of final united evaluation and implementation by a future All-Africa Lutheran Conference.
6. In view of the many requests made by African churches for studies in the area of stewardship, and in view of the fact that an adequate study on this subject has already been carried out by Dr. Helge Brattgård and others, be it recommended that the conference encourage the churches to make arrangements for workshops which will be conducted by LWF.

The Conference resolved that these recommendations be adopted.

II. *Christian Film Production*

A proposal that the Lutheran Churches of Africa engage in production of Christian films was presented to the Conference by Rev. N. Sköld from Rhodesia. Mr. Sköld, presently Director of Afro-Vision Trust, a film production unit, related to the Rhodesia Christian Conference, made the following proposals:

1. That LWF be requested to consider the establishment of one or more production centers in Africa for the production of projected AV materials.
2. That LWF be requested to work out Terms of Reference and appoint governing bodies for such production centers.
3. That LWF be requested to support such governing bodies, financially or otherwise.
4. That LWF be requested to adopt the already existing Lutheran Film Production Centre in Salisbury as a pilot scheme.

The conference resolved:

1. That, in recognition of the growing importance of, and the increasing need of professionally produced film and other audio-visual material aimed at establishing contact with, and communicating the Christian message to the peoples of Africa and Madagascar, the All-Africa Lutheran Conference endorse the general idea behind Rev. Sköld's four proposals, and
2. That, in view of the need for more detail and expert consultation on the details and implementation of the proposals, these be referred to the Consultation on Mass Communication Media to take place immediately following the AALC, with the request that the results of the consultation be submitted to LWF for action.

III. *Resolution on Mass Media*

Whereas the establishment of Radio Voice of the Gospel has inaugurated a new era in the use of up-to-date evangelistic methods, and

Whereas this venture of radio evangelism has opened to the African churches new channels of communication with people inside and outside the church, and

Whereas the use of the potentiality of the medium of radio has only begun, and

Whereas no single medium of communication can accomplish the entire task alone

Be it resolved:

1. That the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference express its deep gratitude to all participating Christian churches, to the Lutheran World Federation, and the Coordinating Committee for Christian Broadcasting in particular, for the invaluable service rendered by RVOG to the peoples of Africa, Madagascar, and the Near East.
2. That the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference strongly urge all its member churches to give increasing attention to the urgent task of follow-up work, i.e. bringing the individual interested listener into a living and helpful relationship with the Christian community in his neighborhood.
3. That the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference recommend to its member churches serious consideration of a more effective and coordinated use of all the mass media (radio, TV, film and the printed page) in their respective areas, in order to establish contact and effectively communicate with non-Christians and Christians alike.

IV. Greetings to Churches not present

It was proposed and the conference resolved:

That the All-Africa Lutheran Conference send a letter of greeting to those churches in South Africa which were not able to attend the conference, and express our regret over their absence from our days of fellowship here.

We rejoice over the efforts toward closer fellowship among the churches in South Africa and pray that all brethren there will express their unity in such ways as will further their witness to the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

V. General

1. The Conference is grateful to God for having made it possible for the Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference to meet in Addis Ababa under the theme "A Living Church in a Changing Society" and for His presence and blessing during this conference, and for the significant progress made in recognizing our tasks and responsibilities in His kingdom since the first All-Africa Lutheran Conference.

2. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its deep gratitude to His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Ethiopia, Haile Selassie I for honoring the conference with his presence, for his message and good wishes, for the reception in the Jubilee Palace, and for making the facilities of Africa Hall available to the conference. We pray God's blessing upon him, his government and his country.
3. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its appreciation to his Holiness the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church for the opportunity to visit the historic cathedrals of the Holy Trinity and Saint Georgis in Addis Ababa.
4. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its sincere gratitude to the Ethiopian Evangelical Church — Mekane Yesus, its officers and staff, members of the committees on local arrangements and organization of the conference, and congregations in and near Addis Ababa for their dedicated labors of love and generous hospitality, for the reception banquet, and for the inspiring music of the international choir.
5. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its sincere thanks to the Lutheran World Federation, the Department of World Mission and its staff, for vision, planning and effort given to this conference which has made it an abiding blessing to all who attended, and to the agencies which have made travel of delegates possible financially.
6. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its gratitude to the Bible study leaders, speakers, consultants, chairmen and committee leaders, and the Senior Editor of the LWF Information Bureau, for their significant and lasting contribution to the success of this conference and prays God's continued blessings on them all.
7. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference requests the associate General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation to extend on our behalf a greeting in Christ to the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Federation.
8. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference acknowledges the greetings sent to this conference by churches, councils and individuals and requests the co-chairmen of this conference to send letters of acknowledgement and greetings to the same.
9. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its gratitude to the director and staff of Radio Voice of the Gospel for the many ways they have assisted in the work of this conference, for the inspiring visit to the RVOG facilities and for the gracious hospitality shown the members of the conference.
10. The Third All-Africa Lutheran Conference expresses its gratitude for the attendance and the contributions made by representatives of other than Lutheran churches at this conference.

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